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ABSTRACT

This report presents an investigation of after-school care for primary school children in Western Australia. The needs of primary school children are discussed, and care provided through schools and communities is examined. The headmasters of 110 primary schools, in response to a questionnaire, reported a strong belief that many children were neglected and at risk as a consequence of the mother working outside the home. Additional survey results (from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey, May 1973, and newspaper investigations) revealed that many children attended after school clubs and activities, but it was not ascertained whether these were the same children who did not have parents at home after school. Statistical data and comments from questionnaire responses, government studies, professional literature, and community sources are reported. It is recommended that at least one teacher in every school should be responsible for developing and implementing proposals for school-community efforts to insure the recreational and social welfare of all children attending the school. (BRT)

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CHILDREN IN THEIR FREE TIME

RESEARCH BRANCH
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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CHILDREN IN THEIR FREE TIME

T.M. BECK

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FOR ATTENTION: INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSION

I submit the attached report entitled "Children in Their Free Time" in fulfilment of the terms of your Letter of Contract dated 28th May 1973.

The views expressed in the report, especially in the final chapter, are those of the researchers and not of the Education Department as such. Any moves to implement the recommendations would be subject to the normal processes of planning and formulation of policy.

I am pleased to acknowledge the contributions of the following persons:

Mr T.M. Beck, Senior Research Officer, who is the author of the report.

Miss P. Moyes and Mr K.L. Brown, Research Assistants, for their help in defining the problem, collecting and analysing data, and providing many useful ideas in the course of the Project.

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By no means least, the Headmasters and Staff of 110 primary schools, who devoted a great deal of time and serious thought to the many questions asked of them, and in many cases provided information well in excess of the formal requirements of the questionnaire.

A.N. STEWART
CHANTEE
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social Problems

Several general statements that can be made about social problems seem to be pertinent to this project.

First, social problems often seem to be simple in structure, easily labelled and talked about, and require only somebody (else), usually the Government, to do something about them and they would be solved.

Second, a social problem can lie relatively dormant for a long time until somebody who is particularly perceptive, or has an active conscience or altruistic motives or good contacts with the media, or wants to be elected to public office, virtually *creates* the problem by bringing it to public notice.

Third, if an eye-catching or ear-catching label (for example, *latchkey children**) is attached to a problem area, preferably by arranging for one or two dramatic headlines in the press, then public and political concern tends to focus on the particular area that is most closely associated with the label. Problems on the fringe (such as *other* children equally in need of attention) may be overlooked in the provision of research funds and compensatory aid.

Fourth, the process of acquiring *useful* factual information about a social problem is difficult. A survey of attitudes towards a problem may be useful for the purpose of planning *how* to carry out a remedial programme (you will know something about the prejudices and opinions likely to be encountered), but if you ask a limited number of people for their assessment of the nature and magnitude of a problem for the purpose of determining what remedial action may be appropriate, there is a danger that they all may be wrong. Caution is necessary in accepting majority opinion as a basis for the assertion of facts or the launching of social welfare programmes.

---

* A somewhat colourful definition of latchkey children is given by Jan Crosley in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 16, 1972:

> They are the children who let themselves into empty houses every day after school; who, until mum comes home at night, have no supervision; who visit neighbours and make a nuisance of themselves; who stay out until six o'clock because no one expects them at home; who yell dirty words across fences at old ladies. The sort of children you keep your own away from.

Finally, social problems are often evaluated as if they were moral issues. This tends to obfuscate the fact that social action is seen by many to be desirable to assist those (such as young children) who are the victims of circumstances outside their control.

The Area of Concern

Australian Governments, welfare agencies and news media have in recent times promoted and achieved a heightened awareness of public responsibility for various areas of welfare. In view of the current national interest both in general social welfare and in education, it is appropriate that this research project should be launched with a view to examining the role and responsibility of Government schools in a particular area of welfare that has traditionally fallen outside their formal function.

When the study was first mooted, and even at the stage when finance was committed, the complexity of the problem was not fully envisaged. The original intention was to obtain through the assistance of Government primary schools in Western Australia a profile of the extent of the need for provision of assistance for the care of children out of school hours.

The public label which first comes to mind in this context is *latchkey children*, and it was tempting to envisage the project as consisting of a few steps which any competent researcher could implement with a modest commitment of time and ingenuity - define the problem, conduct a survey to determine how serious it was, and make recommendations which should follow from an examination of the data. That it has not turned out quite like that will be obvious to anybody who reads beyond this introduction.

The Project

After exploring a number of alternative procedures in the attempt to define parameters and devise survey instruments, and taking into account the contribution of other studies and agencies, it became apparent that this project should seek to achieve the following main objectives:

1. Conceptual analysis of the problem area which starts in popular parlance with latchkey children but in the study is defined as the care of primary school children out of normal, or formal, school hours.
2. Documentation of the contribution which Government schools and teachers are already making in this area.

3. Summary of the opinions of primary school headmasters on -
   i. problems encountered among children in the locality served by their school;
   ii. particular facilities or programmes which could be provided to alleviate problems or improve the quality of life among the children;
   iii. general and long term issues relating to the role of the school in the community.

The survey instrument was sent to the headmasters of 117 Government primary schools, a 25 per cent sample selected at random from all such schools in Western Australia. Of these, 110 questionnaires were returned in time to be processed. This is the number which appears in tables throughout this report unless otherwise stated.

Although the headmasters were requested to respond to the questionnaires they were encouraged to involve members of their staff in providing data and formulating opinions. In addition, considerable emphasis was placed on the expression of comments on all matters relating to the survey topic in order to supplement and check the validity of conclusions which may have been drawn on the basis of statistics alone.

Orientation

No study of a social welfare issue can be made in a moral vacuum. The observations of the author and of every contributor are dependent to some extent on their particular values, no matter how objective they try to be.

This report consists partly of analyses and observations that may reflect biases of the author, and partly of objective reporting of the biased observations of headmasters. No apology is needed for the latter, for social problems *are*, in an important sense, what people perceive them to be. Illustrative of this point is the following extended comment from one school headmaster:

> It is good to see that at last a survey is being compiled! It is a start towards real child care. Many children attending this school now will, at the conclusion of the compulsory school years, become no more than drifters or unskilled workers spending leisure time either drinking, gambling or simply allowing themselves to be lulled by movement on a T.V. screen.

> There are many of these same children whose facial expressions show glimmers of interest and life simply by knowing that someone will listen if they have something to say. ...It is obvious that many of the children receive scant attention at home, for when approached, most display a rather surprised expression. Even when these children (many of them) must ask a favour they do so in a manner which implies that a rebuff would be no surprise.
>
> Morning news sessions are a revelation and new teachers are at first horrified but become so used to recounts of sometimes dreadful home experiences, that they soon lose their feeling of horror, and also after a longer time lose even any deep sympathy for the child.

The comments of this headmaster have been included at this point because although most readers will know, having read them, that they do not represent the circumstances in typical Western Australian homes and communities, many would not have known that there *are* some communities of that kind. The report shows that there is such a wide range of differences between communities and between families that it is unlikely that a single administrative arrangement would meet the needs of all.

But this is not an admission of defeat. An attempt has been made to consider the issues and difficulties that must be taken into account in any plan to improve the well-being of primary school children. If the reader disagrees with any of the premises that have guided the discussion, at least the information provided by the schools should be of value in contemplating action in this area of social welfare.

Summary

Social problems tend to be complicated by dramatic media publicity which often leads public and political concern to focus on a narrow area of the issue. Once raised, they often become intertwined with broader moral issues and value judgements thus making for difficulties in their resolution. The so-called latchkey problem is a case in point. This survey is concerned mainly with the present and possible role of primary schools in the care of children out of school hours. Undoubtedly this report is in itself biased in favour of a particular viewpoint, but much of it reports the views of a random sample of Western Australian primary school headmasters.

2. CHILDREN IN SOCIETY

Children Become Adults

A large and important component of a description of any society would relate to the question of how that society treats its young. Whatever variations there may be from culture to culture, one inexorable process takes place - the young members of society eventually become the adult members. As Mead (1953, p.195) expresses it, the Manus becomes the big Manus, the little Indian the big Indian.

There are great differences between societies with regard to their procedures for rearing and educating their children, yet in general terms the objective is the same. Lauwerys (1964, p.231) comments:

> ...formal schooling has come to play a vital role in modern complex societies. At first sight, such schooling is very different from the education provided in tribal societies. But the differences are perhaps less important than the similarities: the purpose of education in all societies is to transform every unproductive untutored person into a producer, a co-operative member of the community and a person who is capable of improving both himself and society.

Although the purpose of education may be seen as being the same in all societies when it is couched in such general terms, such statements are of little value in determining the appropriate methods of educating a child in any particular society. It is easy to say that in general the methods of educating the young reflect the values and practices of the society at large, yet there seems to be scope for the continuance of dysfunctional school practices, even taking as criteria the objectives and beliefs of the society itself. Coleman (1972, p.431) mentions the possibility of:

> waking up some day to find that educational institutions are finely tuned and efficiently designed to cope with the problems of an earlier day. Among the more general questions, we need to ask how it is that the young become adults, and what are the current and changing roles of the school, the family and the workplace.

An educational process which may seem to be entailed by certain general practices or precedents accepted by society may not eventuate because of illogical planning or inefficient practice. Nevertheless, when particular values become recognized as being of overriding importance, they are likely to permeate the school system at least to some degree. These sorts of influences seem to be involved in current issues such as the role of parents in the running of schools, the function of schools in helping children develop in areas other than literacy, numeracy and knowledge and the degree of formality with which the school programme is administered by teachers.

In our competitive society, for example, it has seemed appropriate to emphasise the skills required to survive and succeed in that society. Competition is associated with effort and discipline, achievement and failure, reward and disappointment. The people best qualified to ensure that children exert the necessary effort were those trained in the art of teaching, which entailed the deft administration of rewards and punishments, exercises and drills, and the repetition of bodies of knowledge which were assumed to be essential for the socialisation of children into loyal and competent citizens. The proliferation of literature critical of existing educational systems reflects the growing disillusionment with the emphasis on competition and recognition that young humans miss out on something important when their lives are processed on assembly line principles. Perhaps a change is occurring in our attitudes towards children, and our perception of their place in society. They are becoming more valued for their own sake, as being already members of society*, and this attitude or value is gradually modifying the traditional approach to schooling.

Paradoxically, although the more humane management of schools is undoubtedly commendable, the broadening of the role of the school has been associated with the fact that the more demanding and complex society becomes the further the child is being removed from the opportunity to experience in real life the situations that provide meaning and relevance to his education. The importance of the family as a source of learning has declined because it is no longer the central productive institution of society, yet the workplace is generally inaccessible to the young until they enter it as full-time workers at the end of a longer and longer period of full-time schooling.

Coleman proposed:

> nothing less than a breaking open of the economic institutions of society, from factories to hospitals, a removing of the insulation that separates them from the young, and giving them an explicit role in the education of the young (1972, p.437).

But nothing like this appears to be happening in Australia on a noticeable scale, and it is to the schools that society seems to turn when changes or additions are required in the education of its children.

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* Most of us probably would accept John Holt's advice (in *Escape From Childhood*) that we must start treating children with respect, courtesy, dignity, the way we treat other adults, but we may be less supportive of his list of children's rights which includes the vote at six years of age, the right to choose their own guardians, the right to travel and live where they choose.

Schools and Community in Western Australia

Western Australia shares with other Australian States the fact that the education system has developed as a highly centralised organization. When the responsibility for universal, free and compulsory education was accepted by State Governments there was no feasible alternative to a large degree of central control of teacher training and provision of resources. The sparse population and great distances isolating small towns and even individual families required that in many cases resources had to be committed grossly out of proportion to the number of children in a particular community. Conditions of service ensured that teachers were obliged to accept positions in remote districts and correspondence education was an early and continuing provision.

A term that has achieved considerable publicity in recent times is *community schools*. The publicity is normally favourable, carrying with it the implications that a community school is not only different and imaginative but that it is also meeting a need that conventional Government schools are failing to meet.

There are at least four main senses in which schools may be more or less directly involved with the community.

1. The school's facilities may be made freely available for the use of the community so long as the activities do not conflict with the formal school programme - library, meeting rooms, evening classes, sporting venues.
2. The school programme may place a heavy emphasis on the community as -
   i. a major focus for the knowledge and skills that children should acquire;
   ii. a major source of information, with children visiting institutions able to assist them in their learning, and parents and other citizens with special interests being invited to participate in the learning programme of the school.
3. The school may be controlled by community organizations with authority to hire and fire, determine salaries and other expenditure, and prescribe curricula. Obviously, somebody has to have final responsibility for these decisions; the point of

mentioning *community* in this context is to refer to an authority much closer to the school and much smaller in scale of operation than say a state authority.

4. Yet another sense of the term may relate to the range of responsibilities accepted by the school additional to the teaching of officially prescribed curricula in a formal programme. For example, it is conceivable that a school that is planned to meet as many community requirements as possible would include not only a public library, facilities for adult classes and venues for evening and weekend sport, but also child-minding facilities for small children and for those of primary school age whose parents are at work until evening.

As a result of the historical antecedents mentioned above it has been somewhat natural for local communities to accept without question the expertise and facilities provided by the Government. Community involvement in the third sense discussed above has been minimal, and until recently this situation has been unquestioned. The only formally approved procedure for engaging community support for schools has been through a Parents and Citizens' Association. Section 23 of the *Education Act* states:

> The objects of an association shall be to promote the interests of the Government school or group of Government schools in relation to which it is formed, by endeavouring to bring about closer co-operation between the parents or guardians of the pupils attending at the school or the group, other citizens, the teachers at the school or the group, and those pupils by providing facilities and amenities for the school or group, including buildings, swimming pools and any type of recreational or educational facilities and amenities, and generally to endeavour to foster community interest in educational matters.

These provisions need to be considered alongside the quite explicit statement in Section 27:

> An association shall not exercise any authority over the teaching staff, or interfere in any way with the control or management of any Government school.

Similar statements relating to the roles of the local community and of the school staff, who in turn are subject to general administrative direction from the Department, are contained in the *Regulations of the Education Department of Western Australia:*

53. A teacher shall not accept for the purposes of any school concert or entertainment, whether to be held during or after school hours, the services, whether as a lecturer, or entertainer or otherwise, of any person who is not a student or member of the staff of the school, unless authority for admission of that person to the school premises is obtained from the appropriate director.

54. (1) A person not being a teacher of the school may during the hours of secular instruction visit a school maintained or subsidised by the Government to observe how the school is conducted, but such person shall not take part in the work of the school.

There is provision for community use of school premises under Regulation 49(1):

> Where in any locality there is no other suitable building for the holding of meetings, religious services or entertainment, the Director-General may let a school building for use for any of those purposes.

There are published *Administrative Instructions* which lay down specific procedures for the enaction of regulations. Although these do allow some discretion for the headmaster of the school in permitting local use of school buildings and property, in some cases it is the duty of the headmaster to forward an application to head office, with his recommendation. The administrative procedures have recently been streamlined and as a consequence it should become easier for headmasters to make schools available beyond the formal hours for programmes sponsored by community organisations.

There are, of course, considerations that encourage caution in liberalising the procedures. The headmaster should be the person best acquainted with local expectations, if he has been in the locality long enough, but it is useful for him to be able to plead "higher authorities" where an unpopular decision is considered necessary. However, because the headmaster is in the best position to dovetail community usage of school facilities with the more regular needs of the school, as the demand increases it seems that a greater degree of co-operative decision-making will be essential. It is also obvious that this is yet another administrative distraction for the headmaster who already has too little time for genuine involvement in the teaching programme of the school. Yet it is also essential that the person responsible for co-ordinating community use of school buildings should fully appreciate the requirements of teaching staff whose routines can be badly disturbed by the

activities of other groups who may move furniture, upset work in preparation, and negate an environmental atmosphere that has been achieved by teachers and pupils in preparation for the following day.

Generally, headmasters in the present system do not remain for many years in the one school. Furthermore, many do not live in the particular community served by their school. They cannot therefore always be fully aware of the precedents and social pressures that underlie local community events and relationships. Further, headmasters differ in respect of the strength of their personality or their ability in dealing with the community beyond the children and staff in their own school. If that is the case, and if the increasing demand for community use of schools makes reference to the head office of the Education Department too cumbersome to operate, then some kind of local authority responsible for certain aspects of school management seems desirable.

Hill (1974, p.27) comments:

> It is possible that lay people in Western Australia are not clamouring for involvement...I believe that, if this is so, it is nevertheless an unstable situation in the light of current trends and in any case there are strong ethical and educational reasons for our profession initiating pilot schemes to increase lay involvement in ways consistent with a rational model. It would seem to be mere good sense to discuss the issue coolly while we way, so that such changes as, I believe, are bound to come, may be handled wisely and well.

The commitment of schools to serve a wider range of community purposes, perhaps over a greater daily time span, may raise some fundamental questions concerning management of the school.

1. If the public is to have access to shared facilities during school time, what authority will be needed and retained by the principal?
2. In the hours outside the normal school programme, as it is currently conceived, should there be a special teacher attached to the school staff, or should teachers generally be rostered or appointed to these kinds of duties as part of an expanded role for teachers, or should local authorities appoint a community director who virtually takes over the school or part of it for a programme that is functionally quite separate from the normal school programme?

3. To whom are the service staff such as caretakers and cleaners responsible and how do the, co-ordinate their duties with the longer hours in which the school buildings are occupied?
4. Who will decide when the school, the playing fields or the assembly hall may or may not be used?
5. What will be the financial commitment of the various parties and what legal obligations or liabilities will have to be considered?

In Western Australia at present these are unanswered questions, though in later chapters it will be seen that some headmasters have quite definite views on the future role and operation of schools.

Children Out of School

The purpose of this study is to document the state of affairs relating to a specific and limited component of the daily lives of primary school children.

There are two fundamental questions to be answered.

1. To what extent is there a problem, or a need, relating to what may be called the free time of primary school children?
2. What action is appropriate and who should be responsible for its implementation?

The answers to these questions depend on the interaction of several aspects of society.

1. The kinds of skills, knowledge and values which adult members of society consider should be learnt by children.
2. Perceptions or beliefs regarding the roles and capabilities of children. These may include some of the following, as well as others -
   i. children need to have some part of the day free to do as they wish;
   ii. children who are left to their own devices waste a lot of valuable time;
   iii. children of primary school age need to be protected from moral and physical danger when they are not in school;
   iv. children need to have somebody older to whom they can turn at any time;

v. children in the upper primary school are usually sufficiently responsible to manage their own affairs between school and tea-time.

3. Existing institutions. The role of the *school* is determined partly in the light of the function of other institutions such as the home, the church, the neighbourhood, welfare agencies, service clubs, employers, and so on. Similarly, consideration of the use of children's *free time*, or of the possibility of extending the role of the school, should take into account the same kinds of community resources. Take, for example, two different kinds of neighbourhood. In small country towns there may be so few opportunities for children to come to harm that it makes no difference whether mother has outside employment or not. The child can probably see his mother at the store on his way home to get changed. The children play with the few other children who belong to their gang, all of whom are well known to their respective parents, who also know each other. In a large city, where people travel miles to work and may not be acquainted with their nearest neighbour, the problems of free time are likely to be far more complex and their solution vastly different.
4. The general ability of the community to solve its own problems. Coleman was cited earlier in a warning that certain forms of institutions may persist even though they are outdated in relation to other developments in society. Institutions designed to cater for children's free time may similarly not make sense in terms of the inputs from 1, 2 and 3 above. Some possible reasons for the failure of child care arrangements are discussed elsewhere in this report. Even carefully evolved plans may fail because of incompetence or limitations imposed by practical considerations. In schools even valid intentions may be thwarted by conservatism among teachers, shortage of money or materials or even opposition from members of the community who it is thought would benefit. In providing special programmes to occupy children in their free time, where this is considered desirable, failure can occur for similar reasons.

Summary

The ways in which a society treats its young people inevitably reflect some of its basic beliefs and values. Nevertheless, for various reasons it can happen that educational institutions outlive their usefulness or fail to fulfil their intended or desirable functions. In Australia one of the areas in which a number of articulate members of society are presently arguing for change is the relationship between schools and communities.

There are several senses in which a school can be oriented towards the community, and the questions being raised concern all of them. Any moves to institutionalise the free time of primary school children *will* be the product of interaction between a variety of goals and values held in regard to children, institutions which already exist, and the level of insight and efficiency which is brought to bear on the issue by all members of the community. Those responsible for intervention through social welfare programmes should be cognizant of this fact at all stages of planning and implementation.

3. CHILDREN IN NEED

A Complex Phenomenon

It is important that people who are concerned with social welfare programmes, and especially those who have power to spend public money, have some appreciation of the complexity of the social phenomena associated with these programmes. It is dangerously easy to derive news headlines from information that is superficially relevant but not explicit on a number of crucial variables. Analysis reveals several logically distinct factors which tend to complicate the planning and provision of services to meet the needs of young children. However such analysis should not become a rationalisation for inaction, when there is in reality an urgent need for relevant social action. The object of rigorous analysis must be a greater measure of justice; the harnessing of genuinely benevolent motives in ways which do not offend the recipients of aid; and efficiency in disposal of the community's resources.

Children at Risk

It is a common public assumption that whenever both parents are still at work when the children arrive home from school, the children are in a state of neglect and are thus exposed to danger of one or several kinds. If this description of *children at risk* is accurate, the measure of the need for some kind of remedy would simply be a count of the number of such children. That this is not so and that the particular social phenomenon under examination is much more complex than at first appearance will now be demonstrated.

A recent report which was given some prominence in the daily press (*Daily News*, 25th March 1973) indicated in the headline that 43,000 families in Australia "don't care". In fact this figure, released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, referred to the number of persons in the labour force responsible for children 4-11 years who made *no arrangements* for their children to be supervised between the finish of school and the arrival of the parents home from work. *The Australian* (26th March 1974) incorrectly reported that an estimated 43,000 parents or guardians made no arrangements *to be at home* when their children, an estimated 100,000, returned from school. The error in the report was that many other parents also were not at home but they professed to have made arrangements for their children to be minded by relatives or friends.

While this type of finding may make an impact in the media and perhaps help to stimulate political action and *probably does* indicate an area for concern, there are some hurdles to negotiate before such statistics can be translated into statements of specific need.

1. What is the length of time during which the children in this situation actually remain unsupervised? There is undoubtedly a considerable range.
2. What do children do during this time? There are several possible advantages in allowing children to "do their own thing" for part of the day. They may develop initiative, form strong and lasting friendships and engage in childhood interests that are not always permitted in the formal programme of Australian primary schools, an opinion shared by at least one headmaster:

   > There is a feeling that children are far too involved in organised activities nowadays and have too little time for free play and recreation.

3. In view of the range of about seven years in the age of children who attend primary school and who are the subject of these statistics, it is reasonable to assume that the supervision needs of eleven-year-olds may be quite different from those of five-year-olds. *No arrangements* may have entirely different connotations in respect of children of different ages.
4. To assert that children are *at risk* (a common expression in discussions about neglected children) raises the question of what the nature of the risk really is. Is it physical, moral, or what? In any case it may vary according to the age and personality of the child, the values and habits which the child learns at home, and the hazards and influences to which the child may be subjected in his immediate neighbourhood. The quality of life experienced in the family when the parents are at home may have produced children who are well adjusted, responsible and not in any special danger. Further, whether or not a particular circumstance is seen as a risk may depend on the values and attitudes of the adults who are in a position to be concerned.

Such questions and qualifications as these tend to throw doubt on the validity of the *no arrangements* category as a criterion of negative parental concern or of children being at risk. However, doubt may also be expressed regarding the validity of other responses, which indicate that arrangements *are* made, as indicators of positive values on these same variables.

1. Many children whose parents *are* at home and physically available to the children at all times, may be equally at risk. If the child does not go home after school but is free to wander, or in any case assumes this freedom, the whereabouts of parents is somewhat irrelevant.
2. Even if parents are at home and children do go home it is by no means guaranteed that the children are being nurtured and 'supervised' in a healthy developmental environment. It is conceivable that mother is at home because she is not able to obtain employment because she is not competent, or is not interested, or lives in a locality which is economically depressed. In other words, devotion to children may not be the only motive which keeps parents at home.
3. It should also be noted, again, that the 43,000 parents were only those who made *no* arrangements. There are numerous arrangements that are made other than that of parents themselves being home, though very little is known about the quality of life enjoyed by children in these circumstances.
4. The data produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics does not include reference to the period *before* school starts in the morning, though some school principals and mothers regard that as the more important time of day in terms of the well-being of children.

The general conclusion arising out of these considerations is that there is no well established method for determining which and how many children are really in need, especially if *need* is assumed to relate not merely to the presence of adult supervision but to the many circumstances that contribute to the total quality of life.

A final thought in this context is that a recognition of children at risk, in the sense of their being exposed to danger, may not be the direct motive for positive action in the field of child care facilities or programmes.

For example, it may be believed, perhaps mistakenly, that children would benefit by having their whole day structured so that they engage in educationally stimulating activities all day long. Or there may be a strong belief among politicians or powerful lobbies that more parents should be encouraged to join the work force and therefore they should be assured of care for their children.

The Needs of Primary School Children

As mentioned in the previous chapter, an obvious factor to be considered in the planning of school and out of school programmes is the set of beliefs and perceptions which society has with regard to its children. Yet in view of the obvious *variety* of circumstances pertaining to children's welfare it may seem absurd to speak in general terms about a *typical* primary school child. Although children are very largely the product of their environment it is well known that children differ widely even though they appear to have been reared in identical circumstances. Nevertheless there are some qualities which distinguish primary school children from human beings of other age levels. The variability is not infinite, and a knowledge of these qualities must be of some relevance to the consideration of child care arrangements. However, even the most scientific and complete description of a child cannot fully entail a statement of *need*, for *need* is related not only to what *is*, but also to what *might be* or what society considers right and desirable for a child to have, to achieve, or to experience.

Any statement about children in Australian society is thus likely to be a product of both observations and value judgments, and even the observations, however scientific and perceptive they may be, are of children already living in a certain kind of community. We cannot contemplate a child in the abstract, especially a primary school child, for his characteristics and his needs have already been determined to a large degree by several years of experience in the community in which he lives.

This point is of more than academic interest in the present discussion, because it pertains not only to gross differences between national communities, but also to differences between local communities and between families. That is, not only are children different at a particular point in time, in terms of characteristics that can be observed and described, but their *needs* differ because of their expectations and the expectations of their families and communities.

It may seem obvious that an Australian child who lives in an Australian community and does not expect to live anywhere else does not *need* to learn the language of a remote tribe in the heart of South America. It may require much more sensitivity to realise that a child in Suburb X *needs* to occupy himself in his spare time in activities which in Suburb Y would not be approved. This leads to the consideration, in the next chapter, of the problems of altruism and of communities knowing or not knowing what they need. However, these cautions must not deter us from the task of basing social action on the best information available.

A final proviso is that whatever may be included in a list of the primary school child's needs it does not necessarily follow that each need can or should be catered for by out-of-school programmes; by the school itself; or by the home. However, knowledge about the children can help to avoid the situation of providing facilities and programmes that are neither wanted nor needed.

Dittmann (1967) classifies the needs of the school child into three areas:

1. The school child still needs protection and care.
2. The school child needs a variety of stimulating experiences.
3. The growing child still needs a friendly adult to rely upon.

Under these general headings the needs may be further summarised in terms of the following selected statements from Dittmann:

1. (a) The child of school age wants some place where he can be welcomed regularly after school, safe from mental and physical hazards.

   (b) Children not only need a safe place to play, but also reassurance about their own worth.

   (c) All children need protection from fatigue which their interests and competitive spirits can easily produce.

   (d) Attention to nutritional status and food habits is especially important in those years.

2. (a) He needs a range of activity which will provide a wholesome balance to the day.

   (b) Play continues to be the real occupation of children, the instrument by which they explore their environment and perfect relationships with others.

   (c) Even the most gregarious youngsters need to have some time to be alone, however. And all children should have some time which is strictly their own - unscheduled by anyone else.

(d) Whether in group or solitary occupations, the child of school age begins to need more opportunity for independent - perhaps even rebellious - activity. He needs much more freedom to move about and make choices. Facilities which offer challenges of both an intellectual and physical type are desirable.

3. (a) Children tend to seek out a place where there is a sympathetic adult.

(b) The primary child comes home from school calling, "Mommmmmm?"...her presence gives him the security he seeks before rejoining his playmates...these moments of returning from school may become the best time of the day for a discussion about things...If the mother, or other responsive adults cannot be present, the child is deprived of supportive contact at a particularly vulnerable time.

(c) The child of school age needs mature adults to serve as an image for his growth and behaviour.

This summary, taken from an American study, seems to include just about every possible point of view, or at least a recipe for every kind of child. But this, after all, is what is needed if *children* are to be the main criterion for planning social institutions to meet their needs. Whatever one may think of the statements, in general or in relation to particular children, they are the *sorts* of things that will have to be considered by anybody responsible for devising a programme of supervision of children.

The Working Mother

By far the most common social phenomenon to be associated with the need for child care facilities is the working mother, though in this report it is argued that the fact that a mother works is neither a necessary nor a sufficient reason for assuming that a child is at risk, and the fact that a mother is not employed outside the home is not a necessary or sufficient reason for assuming that the child is safe, happy and well nurtured.

The situation can be represented diagrammatically to show that there is a tenuous link between whether a mother is at work and whether the child would actually benefit from special adult supervision out of school hours - at least in the general circumstances of Australian society at the present time. Figure 1 illustrates that it is possible to conceive facilities or programmes which would attract and benefit some children who by any reasonable standard are *not* at risk in their present circumstances. The five relevant variables are -

i. whether mother is at work;

ii. whether the child is supervised, at least nominally;

iii. whether the child is neglected and in danger of some kind;

iv. whether the child would attend an out-of-school programme were it provided;

v. whether the child would benefit from such a programme.

Mother works	Yes								No							
Child supervised	Yes				No				Yes				No			
Child at risk	Y		N		Y		N		Y		N		Y		N	
Child would attend	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
Child would benefit	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N

Figure 1. Representation of the relationship between employment of mother and value of child care facilities.

Although the relationship between mother's employment and children's need of supervision is not simple and obvious, this does not mean there is *no* relationship, and so long as social policy and action is based on statistics of working mothers there will be a continuing interest in the subject. In any case, the employment of married women is a continuing subject for discussion quite apart from its relevance to child care.

The Australian, 27th March 1974, expressed an opinion that may be widely held:

> Australian urban society as it is organized today is more or less predicated on the assumption that women will work after they have become mothers. It is practically impossible for the average couple to buy a home if the wife does not do so; certainly, it is impossible for the couple to buy furnishings, pay off the car which is today a necessity in the Australian city, equip themselves with a fridge or in any way enjoy the affluent life on which we pride ourselves, if the wife does not work.

In addition to those mothers who *must* work to keep the family intact, there are those who take employment because they are lonely or bored at home, or because they would like to supplement the family income. These points hardly need further comment. However, a view which came through quite strongly in responses to the questionnaire was that looking after children out of school hours should still be the responsibility of parents. The first of the following extracts was taken from comments by a teacher and the others are from headmasters of primary schools in Western Australia:

. In my opinion children should be completely supervised before and after school hours. This is solely a parental responsibility and therefore parents should choose their employment to fit in with these hours. Parents are the most important factor in a child's upbringing, and this task should be more important than the accumulation of materialistic goods. A mother should always be there when her child comes home from school. In the case of one parent families, outside activities for children after school are essential.

. Speaking generally I would have to admit that the problem of after school supervision of children is a family responsibility. However, modern life styles do not encourage the sincere development of a nuclear family where the child is loved and wanted. There will always be a minority of parents who neigect their children and unless external programmes designed to encourage parental responsibilities are forthcoming the school and its facilities should be utilised.

. Where warranted, based upon the knowledge of social workers and home makers, provision should be made at the school for feeding and after school care. This service should only be provided where the need exists, and should be looked on only as a temporary measure. Parents should be encouraged and trained, where necessary, to take full responsibility for their children's welfare.

. Parental apathy, passed onto the child, is the stumbling block in trying to do anything here.

. Two questions are uppermost in my mind -
(a) Are parents who *wish* to work shelving their responsibilities and expecting the State to supply the remedy?
(b) Would those children "at risk" be the ones to take advantage of equipment and personnel provided?

. I regret the trend in our society to play down motherhood and homemaking. I do not disagree with mothers of young children having out-of-house activities and interests but I would advocate that any such activities and interests be confined to school hours or (possibly) evenings.

I have observed over a number of years the need of the child, and I include the high school child, to have mum or an acceptable substitute at home when the child arrives from school. Reassurance, renewal of affection, unburdening of cares, problems, confessions, sharing experience and providing for physical needs are reasons why children need somebody to go home to.

> My personal opinion is that parents are being encouraged to dispense with their responsibilities in bringing up their own children. Individualism will become a thing of the past and children will become no better than sheep which follow the leader.
>
> Parents are given every assistance to work and leave their children to the care of others. I feel the parents' motive is to earn extra money so they can pursue their own pleasures whereas I believe parenthood is a responsibility and until that idea is firmly entrenched in people's minds - instead of being encouraged to pass the "burden" over to others - then this society as we know it now will have difficulty in surviving.
>
> I feel society would be better served if some means could be found to encourage parents to look after their own children before and after school. Children need the formal school situation but equally the individual care and attention found only in a good home.

Are these the reactionary voices of well-paid, conservative teachers determined to limit their professional involvement to the conventional hours of formal schooling? Do they reflect what is still a significant opinion in Western Australian society? Or are they voicing a considered professional opinion derived from long and informed experience in dealing with primary school children? The answers to these questions have important implications for the planning of social welfare programmes involving schools.

There are some formidable problems in researching this project of whether mothers should work. In fact, there may be a good case for saying not only that the subject is not amenable to conclusive research because of practical difficulties, but also there are moral issues involved and that society should afford to families the opportunity to choose, within reasonable limits, the ways in which they rear their children.

The research literature which would first appear to be relevant to this question is that relating to maternal deprivation. A large number of studies have been carried out to determine the effects on children of being separated from their mother. However, these studies are of very little assistance in the determination of policy on the care of primary school age children for the following reasons.

1. Most research has been carried out with respect to children of pre-school age.

2. The research that has gained the widest recognition has been concerned with total or long-term separation of children from their mothers, or from both parents, rather than the totally different situation of the responsible parent taking employment.
3. The research which does concern the effect of the mother being absent due to employment, whatever the age of the children, appears to be quite inconclusive.

One of the best reviews of the field has been compiled by the Women's Bureau, Department of Labour and National Service (1968) with a concluding summary here quoted in full:

> Although conflicting reports about some effects of maternal employment do appear when a comparison is made of the studies reviewed, the overall finding is that there is no significant difference between the characteristics of children of working mothers and those of non-working mothers.
>
> In particular it could be said the studies as a whole demonstrate that many statements about the working mother, both approving and disapproving, are based not on scientific evidence, but vague pre-conceived generalizations.
>
> Conclusions frequently reported in this review of studies are -
>
> . The quality of home life, especially the quality of mothering is the most significant factor affecting the emotional behaviour pattern in children.
>
> . Children of working mothers are not necessarily deprived of high quality home life and mothering.
>
> . There is no certain relationship between mothers being in paid employment and their children being emotionally disturbed, academically inferior or physically deprived.
>
> . Advantages resulting from additional income, as well as a mother's interest and satisfaction in her job, had beneficial effects on family life.
>
> . There is no evidence of a causal relationship between juvenile delinquency and the single factor of the mother's employment.

It seems unlikely, then, that research can find a clear answer to the question of whether mothers should work during their children's *primary school years*. There are many factors which contribute to the quality of home life and the general well-being of children other than whether the mother is employed. The pre-school years, in many ways the most important, have already passed, so that a large part of the environmental influence on the child's development has already occurred. It would seem, in fact,

that mothers' employment *as such* has very little effect on children, though in particular families the value or harm of mother working may depend on whether relationships are affected and the family is neglected in some way.

Summary

The concept of *need* is complex and there are difficulties in the collection and interpretation of relevant statistics. Even the most scientific and perceptive study of primary school children will not yield a description that permits a statement of the out of school needs of a particular child or group of children in a particular community. Ideological considerations must also be taken into account. These difficulties do not mean that there are few children who would benefit from improved services. Rather, they mean that general statements are of little value in delineating specific needs. For example, the number of working mothers is not the only criterion of children's need. It should be noted that some headmasters expressed a strong belief that many children are neglected and at risk as a consequence of the mother working outside the home.

4. CHILDREN AT RISK IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Introduction

The risks with which this report is concerned might be considered in terms of the extent of the opportunities for worthwhile learning to occur. Children may be *at risk* either because they are in *danger* of being harmed by influences or circumstances in the community, or because they are in a state of *neglect* and are not receiving the attention and experiences which are thought to be normal and rightful for children to receive. The distinction between danger and neglect may not always be clear, and a child who is neglected may also be in danger. Nevertheless, it may be useful to recognise a difference between the risks involved where a child is in *danger* of being run over in the traffic or influenced by criminals, and the risk arising from *neglect*, where the mother may take precautions to protect the child from outside dangers yet neglect to feed it properly or allow it to play with other children in a healthy social environment.

It would seem that all aspects of a child's well-being can be at risk from both danger and neglect. A child may suffer physically, emotionally, intellectually, morally and socially as a result of a great variety of circumstances. Paradoxically *some risk is necessary* to permit the proper personal development of a child and to ensure that he is able to cope with exposure to greater dangers and absence of support at a later time.

Some of the issues and problems entailed in evaluating the state of risk in which a child is placed are discussed briefly in the previous chapter. The purpose of this present chapter is to present an overview of statistics, opinions and other information relating to children at risk in Western Australia.

Public Awareness

In chapter 1 there are some general observations regarding the role of the media in *creating* social problems - mainly in the sense that the press and other media are able to create an awareness of situations and events which many citizens would otherwise not notice. Although the media are sometimes criticised for exaggerating or in other ways misrepresenting the subject matter of their reports, they must be regarded as important instruments and indicators of public awareness. It is convenient, therefore to take press coverage as a measure of public awareness of issues relating to the care of children out of school.

The quotations which follow are a small sample from some of the newspapers during the years 1972-74 and point to the continuing public interest in this subject.

The *Sunday Independent*, 27th February 1972 carried an editorial headed "Latchkey Children" and an article entitled "No parents home to school kids". The comments referred to a short survey carried out among 18 metropolitan (Perth) primary schools in 1971 on behalf of the Young Women's Christian Association. The editorial is quoted in full:

> The survey carried out on latchkey children for the Young Women's Christian Association last year is not definitive.
>
> It has been accurately described as a random probe.
>
> Despite its obvious limitations, it does pose some very serious questions.
>
> If, for example, further investigation substantiates that up to one-third of our school children are left to their own devices for varying periods after school, a potentially dangerous social problem could be involved.
>
> Professor Schlessinger points out that the working mother is a fact of life.
>
> But the fact has emerged too quickly without any, or adequate, planning for the by-products involved.
>
> We could be creating for ourselves a very real delinquency problem.
>
> The first requirement is a more detailed and scientific examination of the situation.
>
> And this should be undertaken on a state basis.
>
> Now.

The *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11th July 1972 published a two-part report entitled "Children with part-time mothers: An investigation". The headline for the first part was "Dangers of a latch-key generation".

> Latch-key children, school pupils from six to teens. They are children of working mothers who come home from school to find an empty house. The 1969 national survey showed that 14.7 per cent were in this category. Other studies have put the figure as high as 30 per cent in industrial areas.
>
> We don't have systematic research to say that latch-key kids have problems, said Mr Wilfred Jarvis, senior lecturer in behavioural science at the University of New South Wales. We have got to wait for them to live a few years to see what the problems are. You would predict on the basis of all that we know about human beings that it is a most regrettable practice.

The *Weekend News*, 1st September 1972 carried a provocative feature headlined "The boons of being a latch-key child (for one thing, you get a happier mother)". It refers to research from elsewhere purporting to show that unsupervised children may not be such a problem as is often assumed, and asks that money be spent, if at all, to find out first whether there is a problem in Western Australia:

> ...unsupervised children were not more delinquent or had any more emergency ward hospital treatment than supervised children.
>
> Unsupervised had no more school absence, psychological referrals or non-conforming behaviour patterns than supervised children.
>
> Maternal employment had little effect on children's educational aspirations, expectations and achievement.
>
> Sons of employed mothers from skilled worker-labourer groups had highly graded averages in comparison with boys of mothers who stayed at home...
>
> School achievement, particularly reading, was enhanced by maternal employment, especially among professional groups.
>
> ...working mothers not only spent more time hearing children read, but also encouraged their husbands to do the same...
>
> My argument is that if we are going to spend money let's do it finding out if there is a problem rather than stating quite categorically there must be one.
>
> If there is no problem, you have not only wasted money, but you have also created problems.

The Western Teacher, 8th March 1973 advised that the State School Teachers' Union of Western Australia had:

> approached the Government acquainting it of the growing problem of "latch-key" children and asking the Government for information on any plans in hand.
>
> A number of parents are sending their children to school in the morning well ahead of opening time and hope that their children will be cared for after school closing time.
>
> The children usually have working parents and are referred to as "latch-key" children because a key is strung around the child's neck to allow entry to its home after school.

An editorial in *The West Australian*, 21st September 1973 was headed "After School?". The editorial touches on several issues discussed in this report:

> It is appalling that so little has been done for the thousands of Western Australian children who, because their mothers work, return to empty homes after school and kindergarten each day.

> The State has an estimated 6,500 latch-key children in the four-to-eleven age bracket alone, and the figure will grow each year as more mothers go out to work.
>
> It is some comfort that overseas surveys suggest that latch-key children are no more prone to delinquency, ill-health, lower school achievement or behaviour problems than other children, though it does not follow that this is so in Western Australia. Such findings certainly do not justify failure to provide more care and supervision for children.
>
> The mother who works, whether by choice or necessity, plays a vital and expanding role in the economy.
>
> Flexible working hours that would allow at least one parent to be home when the children were not at school would solve the problem for many working couples. But they would not remove the need for many more after-school centres than *the one* that exists at present [emphasis added].
>
> There are more than enough schools, halls and pavilions that could be used as centres in a crash programme to provide supervised facilities for latch-key children. The money to staff and equip them could be provided by the mothers themselves, their employers and State and Federal authorities. Unions, too, should take an active role.
>
> Comprehensive surveys to identify the areas of greatest need should begin immediately.

Catherine Johnson reports in *The West Australian*, 20th March 1974 under the heading "Somewhere to go when school is out". The following quotation is part of her report:

> School is out and 154,350 pupils laugh and jostle their way out of the 679 primary schools in the State, gleeful in the knowledge that they have finished another school day and can go home. But the smiles on many of the faces fade quickly.
>
> They are the 6,500 children who face the prospect of returning to an empty house and amusing themselves till six o'clock when their parents return home...
>
> The problem has existed since schools were started, because there have always been widows and widowers, divorcees, deserted parents, un-married mothers and parents who have needed to work to provide for their children.
>
> The situation has not improved because the trend of mothers continuing with careers has gained popularity.
>
> ...At present, there are only two after-school centres operating in the metropolitan area - far from adequate for 6,500 children.

The Australian, 26th March 1974 in an article already cited in this report, made reference in a headline to *100,000 Latch-key children:*

> A national survey carried out by the Australian Statistics Bureau shows that an estimated 43,000 parents or guardians make no arrangements to be at home when their children return from school.
>
> The children - called "latch-key" children because they are often given keys to enter their family homes - total nearly 100,000 and make up 12 per cent of all children attending primary school. An estimated 63,000 children are left to their own devices during school holidays.

The following day *The Australian* engaged in some breast-beating on behalf of Australian Society:

> The problem of the latch-key children - which now concerns the Australian Statistics Bureau - has always been with us, and we have always been worried about it. That is the REAL problem: Australian society is constantly saying how concerned it is at the volume of young school children left to their own devices between the time school shuts and the time their mother comes home, and never doing anything about it.
>
> ...The real point of the Statistics Bureau survey, which has shown that there are thousands of latch-key children in Australia of school age alone, is that we as a society have a moral duty to face both the problems of latch-key children and pre-school children.

Finally, *The National Times*, 1st April 1974 joined the voices of concern and engaged in a greater degree of finger-pointing than was evident in other press opinions:

> Child care centres, which were desperately inadequate anyhow, are closing and the only expanding aspects of the problem are the statistics documenting the failures.
>
> What is to be done about the estimated 100,000 children under the age of 12 who go home to empty houses after school? There must be action: this figure has risen by 38 per cent since the last survey made in 1969.
>
> Dozens of fingers poke futilely in the child care administration pie. At Federal Government level there is the Social Welfare Commission, and the Education Department; at State Government level are the Education and Child Welfare Departments; at local authority level a handful of concerned councils remain mostly wrapped up in kerbs and gutters; and at voluntary level there are all sorts of well-meaning, long standing groups which have only inability in common, tackling the problem in a piecemeal and often positively destructive fashion.
>
> One thing is certain: however many politicians, bureaucrats, and middle class volunteers are busy at their desks, the achievements are little more than zero, and streams of children are little more than names on waiting lists.
>
> We seem to have over-governed ourselves to a point of total deadlock. Child care is just an example.

Careful content analysis of these extracts reveals a shift in thinking over the three year period. Early comments emphasised the need for research but later comments bemoaned the lack of action to solve the alleged problems which all newspapers assumed to exist. Further, all were in favour of social action being taken. None suggested that a laissez-faire policy be adopted. Finally, all ignored the possibility that children of non-working mothers may also be at risk because of the absence of appropriate programmes.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey, May 1973

The Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted a survey throughout Australia in May 1973 to obtain information about the arrangements parents made to have their children cared for while they themselves were at work. Reference has been made already to some of the problems involved in translating global statistics into statements regarding children's *needs* for care, supervision, or any other kind of assistance. Nevertheless, without the statistics we would know even less about the area of concern, and the fact remains that political and social action is frequently based on information derived from national statistics.

Selected Western Australian statistics have been extracted and they are produced here because such figures are often used as a basis for assessing the scope of child care needs. The figures in the tables should be considered with the following points in mind.

1. The *person responsible* was defined as the person aged 15 to 59 years who, being a member of the household to which the child belonged, ranked highest in the following list:
   a. Child's mother, step-mother, foster-mother, female guardian.
   b. Child's father, step-father, foster-father, male guardian.
   c. Any other person considered by the respondent as being responsible for the child.
2. The survey was conducted in May 1973 and significant changes may have occurred since that time.
3. The sample used in the survey consisted of about 27,000 private dwellings and a sample of other dwellings from the whole of Australia. The information was obtained during a four-week period by interviewers who used a highly structured response schedule. Since the estimates presented in the tables are based on a sample they may differ from the figures that would have been obtained from a complete census.

For this reason the figures must be regarded with reasonable caution and not as accurate and reliable tallies. Caution is particularly appropriate where a figure within a table is less than 4,000 in view of the relative uncertainty of the accuracy of estimates where the number involved is small.

4. The *labour force* comprises persons who are employed *and* those unemployed (who do not have a job or business - but are actively looking for work). Persons *not in the labour force* includes those who are either keeping house (unpaid) or are for other reasons without a job, business or farm and are not actively looking for work.
5. Any apparent errors in the totals columns are due to rounding of figures in the cells of the table.

TABLE 4.1: PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE, BY LABOUR FORCE STATUS AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN, WESTERN AUSTRALIA MAY 1973.

Number of Children Under 12 Years of Age	In The Labour Force	Not in The Labour Force	Total
One	22,400	26,800	49,100
Two	17,600	31,600	49,200
Three	5,900	14,500	20,400
Four or more	2,600	6,500	9,100
Total	48,500	79,400	127,900

The following observations may be made from figures presented in Table 4.1, with regard to persons responsible for children in Western Australia.

1. In round figures, of 130,000 families with children under 12 years of age, 80,000 have a responsible person who is *not* employed or seeking employment, while 50,000 responsible persons *are* members of the work force.
2. It is much more likely for a mother with *one* child than with *two or more* children to be in the work force.

TABLE 4.2: PERSONS IN THE LABOUR FORCE RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN (a) UNDER 6 YEARS OF AGE, (b) AGED 6-11 YEARS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, MAY 1973.

(b) Number of persons responsible for:	(a) Number of persons responsible for nil, one and two or more children under 6 years			Totals, 6-11 Years
	Nil	One	Two or more	
Nil	(1)* -	(2) 7400	(3) 5800	(4) 13200
One	(5) 15000	(6) 4800	(7) 900	(8) 20800
Two or more children aged 6-11 years	(9) 10100	(10) 3500	(11) 1000	(12) 14500
Totals, Under 6 Years	(13) 25100	(14) 15700	(15) 7700	(16) 48500

* (1) - Cell 1.

The information in Table 4.2 may be expressed in several ways.

1. The grand total (48,500) is the same as the total in column 1 of Table 4.1 - persons in the labour force and responsible for children (cell 16).
2. Of the 22,400 (Table 4.1 top left) persons in the labour force responsible for only one child -
   i. 15,000 (67 per cent) of their children are aged 6-11 years (cell 5);
   ii. 7,400 (33 per cent) are under 6 years (cell 2).
3. Of the 26,100 persons in the labour force responsible for two or more children (cells, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11) -
   i. 5,800 (22 per cent) have them all under 6 years (cell 3);
   ii. 10,100 (38 per cent) have them all 6-11 years (cell 9);
   iii. 10,200 (40 per cent) have one or more children under 6 years *as well as* one or more 6-11 years (cells 6, 7, 10, 11) though of this number the great majority (8,300) (81 per cent) have only one child under 6 years (cells 6, 10).
4. Of the 23,400 persons in the labour force who have any children under 6 years (cells 14, 15) -
   i. 15,700 (67 per cent) have only one child in this age group (cell 14);
   ii. 7,700 (33 per cent) have two or more in this age group (cell 15).

5. Of the 48,500 persons in the labour force and responsible for children under 12 years -

   i. 13,200 (27 per cent) have no children aged 6-11 years (cell 4);

   ii. 25,100 (51 per cent) have no children under 6 years (cell 13);

   iii. 10,200 (22 per cent) have children in both age groups (cells 6, 7, 10, 11).

6.(a) Of the 23,400 persons in the labour force responsible for any (one or more) children under 6 years (cells 14, 15) -

   i. 13,200 (57 per cent) have no children aged 6-11 years (cell 4);

   ii. 5,700 (24 per cent) have one child aged 6-11 years (cell 6, 7);

   iii. 4,500 (19 per cent) have two or more aged 6-11 years

(b) Of the 35,300 persons in the labour force who have children aged 6-11 years (cells 8, 12) -

   i. 25,100 (71 per cent) have no children under 6 years (cell 13);

   ii. 8,300 (23 per cent) have one child under 6 years (cells 6, 10);

   iii. 1,900 (5 per cent) have two or more under 6 years (cells 7, 11).

Two general conclusions from these analyses are that -

i. having children under 6 years of age is a greater deterrent to joining the labour force than having children aged 6-11 years;

ii. persons responsible for more children are less likely to seek employment.

As an indication of the need for special arrangements to care for children of working mothers in Western Australia we have, in the above tables, only the beginning of the information required. This study is actually concerned specifically with children who attend primary schools. Taking the totals in Table 4.2 for children aged 6-11 years it would appear that approximately 35,000 (cells 8, 12) families are involved, although in Western Australia there are seven years of primary schooling, so the figure could be something over 40,000 families. It can be reasonably estimated that 40,000 families would involve approximately 72,000 children in primary schools. (This figure is derived from Table 4.1 by computing the number of children under 12 years of age of persons in the labour force (1 x 22,400 + 2 x 17,600 + 3 x 5,900 + 4 x 2,600 = 85,700)

and dividing by the number of families (48,500) to give 1.8 as the number of children per working family which is then multiplied by 40,000 families to give 72,000 children.)

That is, 72,000 children in Western Australian primary schools belong to 40,000 families where the responsible person, normally the mother, is a member of the labour force. However, Table 4.3 shows that in approximately 10,000 of these families, representing perhaps 18,000 children, the responsible parent is in fact employed (i.e. earning an income) at home, in which case the problem of caring for children *on account of parents being absent* does not arise (40,000-30,000).

Table 4.3 provides some information on this subject. The table refers to *school* children *aged 4-11 years*, which in Western Australia would be a slight underestimate of the number of children in primary schools since five twelfths of the Year 7 children would be included as they would be 12 years of age by May (when the survey was conducted). The table would not include children under 5 years 5 months for they would not be in school in this State.

TABLE 4.3: PERSONS IN THE LABOUR FORCE, NOT INCLUDING THOSE WHO WORK AT HOME, RESPONSIBLE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN AGED 4-11 YEARS, BY AFTER-SCHOOL CARE ARRANGEMENTS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, MAY 1973.

Type of After-School Care Arrangements	Number of Persons
Work during school hours or at night	12,200
Child's father at home	*
With other relatives, including brothers and sisters of the children, at home	5,500
With relatives or friends, not at child's home	*
Other arrangements	*
No arrangements	5,400
Total	29,900

* Less than 4,000 persons.

Assuming that Table 4.3 presents figures that correspond approximately to the primary school population of Western Australia (see the explanation above) it is possible to make the following observations.

1. Of the 30,000 families (round figures) with primary school children whose responsible parent or guardian is in the labour force working away from home -
   i. 12,200 work only during the school hours or at night;
   ii. 5,500 leave the children at home with relatives;
   iii. 5,400 profess to have made no arrangements;
   iv. 6,800 make other arrangements (29,900-23,120).
2. Although it is the "no arrangements" figure (perhaps 10,000 children in 5,400 families in Western Australia) which raise outcries in the media, there may be reasons why many children in all of the other categories, as well as children whose parents are *not* in the work force, are just as much in need (or *not* in need, as the case may be) as children for whom no arrangements are made.

In summary, although the very global and general statistics currently available may be useful as a starting point they cannot provide conclusive guidelines on the extent to which children need supervision out of school hours.

Headmasters Express Their Opinions - Selected Comments

Headmasters and their staff were invited to express their opinions about the welfare of children in the local community in two ways - by responding to the questionnaire and by writing freely on any matters which were not adequately dealt with by items in the questionnaire (Form 6).

One of the more striking impressions gained by reading these comments is the fact that communities differ greatly with regard to the quality of life and opportunities which are available to school age children. It is also important to remember that the communities here have been assessed by different headmasters and that therefore the reports may not be fully comparable. However, in general the questionnaires have been completed in consultation with other members of the staff and this consultation would have tended to reduce the possible biases of individual headmasters. In any case, the comments are interesting in their own right, not only because they draw attention to the gross differences which undoubtedly do occur between communities in Western Australia but also because this survey is concerned with the views of teachers as such.

In an early stage of the planning of this study it was thought that there would be no need to include in the sample of schools those which were in isolated rural communities because it was almost certain that after-school supervision problems would not occur in such places. A late decision to take the sample (25 per cent) from *all* Government primary schools (except for special schools) has proved worthwhile in terms of the comments which have come from some of the country areas.

Some headmasters supported the original expectations regarding country schools:

- This one-teacher country school would be characteristic of many country schools in that most children travel on school buses and "child care" becomes virtually irrelevant.
- The child care need does not arise in this town...a small compact mining settlement...houses, roads, footpaths, hall, pool, oval, movies, clubs, fire brigade, ambulance, supermart, post office, kindergarten, television...all workers off between 3.15 to 6.15 p.m....few mothers work...all children within walking distance of school. Almost all have bicycles - maze of tracks surround the town for bike riding, rabbit trapping, tree climbing etc.
- The need for out of school activities is not so great in the average country town because generally the normal after school sport and odd jobs on the farm are sufficient to fill the children's time.
- There is no problem after school in this area as far as after school supervision goes. The children travel home by bus to their farms where there is usually at least one parent home. If both parents are absent, it is usual for private arrangements to be made whereby the child/children stay at another farm until the parents return.
- Because of the particular circumstances of this school there is little need for any supervisory programme for children out of school hours. But from my own personal experience I feel that there is a tremendous need for such a programme in many areas in the metropolitan area, especially areas that could be said to be disadvantaged.
- I am sorry that the replies in this questionnaire have been so sparse, but this is a special area since 98 per cent of the school lives on farms away from the townsite. All of these catch school buses and some (50 per cent) travel very long distances each day (80-145 kilometres). Thus, the problems posed in the questionnaire do not apply here to any extent.
- This area is a semi rural area and problems that arise in urban situations are not present. As far as I know there are no 'latchkey' children at this school.

Others, however, presented a more dismal picture of life in particular small country communities:

> . ...This town provides what would probably be one of the bottom spots on a survey of this nature. With the exception of the itinerant workers (Government employees etc.) and station people whose children do not frequently come into town, there is a complete lack of ambition among the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. They show little interest or inclination to lift themselves out of their present situation and are more interested in drinking than anything else. The majority of service activities around the town are kept going by the efforts of the itinerants who are expected to carry out these duties.
>
> There is little available for youngsters...no swimming pool, no junior sporting organisations etc. What activity is available is generally through the school in the form of homework classes, occasional interschool sports organised on weekends etc. Many of the children spend much of their leisure time outside the hotel or wandering unsupervised around the town. The only activity outside school is scouts and also a once a month afternoon religious period provided by some Roman Catholic sisters. As with the parents, the children show little inclination to improve their situation. Their greatest source of enjoyment seems to be breaking bottles - perhaps a psychological reaction to the effect the contents have on their parents.
>
> Delinquency is a major problem with quite a number of the older boys who already have records for breaking and unlawful use of motor vehicles.
>
> Cultural deprivation would probably be the key to the whole situation. The Aboriginal population (providing about 90 per cent of the pupils) seem content to accept the beneficial aspects of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal life styles but not prepared to accept the responsibilities of either way of life. The white children who have been in this situation for a long time have also developed similar attitudes. A large number of the children have never been out of this area and hence have little experience of life elsewhere. Certainly television would help to provide a broader outlook on life.

One of the most thoughtful and constructive comments came from a headmaster in a small farming community. It raises the question of whether the provision of facilities should be determined as a *problem-solving* measure or as a positive contribution to the development of children who may not at present be classified as being at risk:

> It appears to me that in country areas, especially *small* areas, the need is for facilities *for development of children rather than for care*. There is a great need for qualified people to be made available for music, crafts, etc. These need not be in school time; in fact, there appears to be good reason for them to be out of school time - e.g. "poor" students may respond better in an out of school situation.
>
> At the same time, the problems of distance between homes and school, or home and town, makes school time more attractive for extra-curricula activities, since this is the only time all of the children are together. If any consideration is to be given to organised after-school activity in country schools it would have to be for *all* children so that school buses could be re-timetabled on that day.

Another respondent recognised the same sort of need but seemed to find the transport problem overwhelming:

> The real need of children of this area would be after school activities to counter the isolation factor, and cultural and social deprivation. The problem here is one of transport, especially to the more outlying farms. Some children already leave home shortly after 7.00 a.m. and do not return until after 4.30 p.m. because of the long distances to travel by school bus.

A final comment on a small community conveys an impression of the life style but is non-committal as to whether it is a problem situation or whether particular provisions are required:

> This is a small community having quite a few homes where both parents work (7.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.). Within the relative safety of the township the children roam freely. There does not appear to be great concern by many parents as to the time their children are home of an evening resulting in gangs of primary and high school children wandering the streets until as late as 9.00 p.m. Most homes have T.V. The commonest form of recreation for the parents is drinking.

Many descriptive comments were made regarding facilities and circumstances in the communities in which schools were located. Some are pertinent to other parts of this report and are quoted in the appropriate contexts. This section is concluded with six quotations which reflect the range of conditions encountered in *urban* communities and, in part, they reflect the range of beliefs of headmasters regarding children being at risk:

> . The question of supervised, organised after school activities by adults has overtones of regimentation or extended institutionalisation. Children have their own world in which adults have no part. The fault of it is that so many people want to deprive them of the opportunity to enjoy their private childhood leisure time.

- This suburb is well spread out and arguments applicable to high rise communities, slums and ghettoes of other countries where room or space is so restricted, simply do not apply. The community seems to lack extremes in wealth or poverty, children are well cared for, well dressed, well fed and with assistance from the school, well behaved.
- This school draws its pupils from a better-than-average cross section of the population. The percentage of working mothers is not as high as one might expect. The district is well provided with many types of clubs offering varying activities immediately after school and during the early evening.
- The greater majority of the children attending this school are from broken homes. In many cases de facto partners have combined families, creating added problems. Many of the children possess creative talents - the development of these can only be achieved at school because of the lack of halls - clubs etc. It is my considered opinion that community centres - libraries - halls where youth groups can be established are a must in the immediate future.
- Of the parents (mothers) who work at this school, the majority work because of a desire to fulfil themselves other than just as housewives. Others go to work just because they can't stand housework or their own company. The bulk of these are at home to greet the child, or arrive soon after. I'm not sure it has yet been shown that children left alone to mope, or think, or just waste time are any worse off in the long run than the child badgered into doing things for his own need. The few latch-key children at this school don't appear to pose any special problems, at present.
- The chief reason for the severe retardation evident in schools like this school is inadequate background. This begins from birth. Many children in this area have little communication with parents and little stimulation. Pre-school children are sent outside to play and interaction with mother and father is minimal.

Together these comments indicate that in both rural and urban communities headmasters perceived a wide range of social and economic circumstances. They were divided in their estimations of the extent of the problem of children at risk. Many small rural communities appear endowed with ample facilities and interested persons so that children in their free time are well occupied. Others appear to be characterised by the presence of generally disinterested parents and an absence of vital community programmes. A similar distinction between various metropolitan communities emerged.

Responses to the Questionnaire

Introduction. Two parts of the questionnaire, Forms 3 and 4, asked headmasters about the extent of need and risk among children who attended their schools.

Form 3 of the questionnaire began as follows:

> Would you like to see the following provided out of school hours for the children who attend your school? Select one of the following responses and write the corresponding number in Column II.

Table 4.4 gives a summary of the responses.

TABLE 4.4: RESPONSES OF HEADMASTERS TO QUESTION ON NEED AND PROVISION OF FACILITIES (FORM 3)

Provision	Number of Headmasters					
	1. No-not needed	2. Not sure	3. Yes-definite need but no current provision	4. Yes-current provision is inadequate	5. Current provision is adequate	No Response
a. Breakfast provided at school	90	8	9	-	1	2
b. Afternoon snack	89	8	9	1	1	2
c. Homework facilities	66	14	14	7	7	2
d. Clubs (Brownies, Ambulance Cadets, etc.)	16	7	27	22	36	2
e. Physical activities	24	5	20	20	39	2
f. Creative activities (pottery, drama)	15	14	61	10	7	3
g. Library	24	4	22	28	30	2
h. Special interest and hobby groups	14	18	59	11	7	1
i. Recreation worker	24	15	59	6	4	2
j. Social worker	25	27	42	8	6	2
k. Community service	25	34	31	7	8	5
l. Television films	34	26	22	10	12	6

The responses called for in Table 4.4 do not constitute a scale from "high" to "low" or vice versa on any one variable, so there is no point in considering the average response of headmasters to each item. However, it is enlightening to look at the number of responses in particular cells of the table to see whether any general statements can be justified.

Some evidence of the thinking behind headmasters' responses to Form 3 can be obtained by considering their responses to Form 4 (see Table 4.5 following) which was introduced as follows:

> What is the extent of the following problems among children who attend your school? Tick the appropriate boxes in Section II:
> 1 = Minimal; 2 = Moderate; 3 = Considerable; 4 = Serious.

TABLE 4.5: RESPONSES OF HEADMASTERS REGARDING EXTENT OF PROBLEMS AMONG CHILDREN WHO ATTEND SCHOOL (FORM 4)

Problem	Number of Headmasters					
	1. Minimal	2. Moderate	3. Considerable	4. Serious	No Response	Mean*
1. Vandalism	79	18	8	3	2	1.4
2. Theft	77	21	10	-	2	1.4
3. Indiscipline at school	79	21	5	-	5	1.3
4. Academic retardation	24	43	32	8	3	2.2
5. Emotional deprivation	47	34	19	5	5	1.8
6. Malnutrition	83	23	1	-	3	1.2
7. Maltreatment at home	84	13	4	-	9	1.2
8. Economic poverty	65	23	16	1	5	1.6
9. Speech defects	53	39	13	2	3	1.7
10. Cultural deprivation	24	26	38	17	5	2.5
11. Truancy	92	13	2	-	3	1.2
12. Absconding when in trouble	99	5	3	-	3	1.1
13. One parent families	54	29	19	5	3	1.8
14. General neglect	78	22	7	-	3	1.3

*Mean is the average reported extent of the problem not including those in the *no response* column.

Significant patterns of responses to these two parts of the questionnaire are highlighted in the following sub-sections of this chapter.

Breakfast and Afternoon Snacks. Easily the strongest response in Table 4.4 was *No - not needed* to items a. and b. which concerned the provision of *breakfast* and *afternoon snack* for children. Although it may seem that there is overwhelming satisfaction with the provision of nourishment for the children, it could nevertheless be suggested that, in Western Australia, it is a matter for concern that *9* headmasters out of 110 reported a *definite need* and 8 others were not sure. It is reasonable to assume that all headmasters would support the idea of ensuring that children are adequately fed, and that therefore when they respond *not needed* this means that the children *are* being fed at home rather than that it is not desirable to feed children. Similarly, it is unlikely that a headmaster would indicate a *definite need* unless he had reason to believe that some children were undernourished.

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Of the fourteen problems listed in Table 4.5 it is apparent that *malnutrition* is perceived as being among the least in extent or seriousness. This is consistent with the data presented in Table 4.4 with regard to the provision of food at school. Further analysis reveals that of the 24 who responded that malnutrition is a moderate (23) or considerable (1) problem, 12 considered that it was not necessary for the school to provide breakfast, 5 were not sure, and only 6 thought the school should provide breakfast. However, an additional 3 supported the idea of providing breakfast at school, even though the malnutrition problem was minimal.

Only 3 headmasters favoured the provision of *both* breakfast *and* afternoon snack. Ninety-one were either opposed to or not sure about *both* provisions.

The pattern of responses linking perception of *malnutrition* with provision of an *afternoon snack* is very similar to the pattern discussed above with regard to provision of *breakfast*.

It may be concluded that most primary school headmasters did not support the extended involvement of schools in the provision of food, yet a significant minority recognize a malnutrition problem, and a significant minority does support the idea of schools providing breakfast and an afternoon snack.

A related issue that was not raised, but should be raised in a more thorough study of the role of the school in providing food, is the provision of lunch. It was omitted here because the concern of this study is the hours before and after school. It may be the case that those headmasters who recognised a nutrition problem but did not support breakfast and afternoon snacks considered that an adequate dietary supplement could be provided at lunch time.

Recreation and Culture. Apart from the fairly strong negative response to the question of whether children need *homework facilities*, the next strongest group of responses were "Yes - definite need but no current provision" in regard to f. *creative activities*, h. *special interest and hobby groups*, and i. *recreation worker* (Table 4.4). For each of these, very few considered that current provision was adequate, or even that there was an inadequate provision. About one-third were not sure or considered that there was no need.

This group of provisions forms an interesting contrast to another group in Table 4.4: d. *clubs*, e. *physical activities* and g. *library*. The main characteristics of responses to the three items, d, e and g, are as follows:

1. The number of headmasters reporting that the provisions are *adequate* is far greater than for any other items.
2. The number reporting that the provision is *inadequate* is also considerably greater than for other items.
3. The number *not sure* is smaller than for all other items.
4. The number responding *yes - definite need* is much smaller than for items f, h and i.

Further evidence that these six items fall into two groups is provided by cross-tabulation of the responses, as presented in Table 4.6.

TABLE 4.6: CROSS-TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO PROVISION f: CREATIVE ACTIVITIES, AND RESPONSES TO PROVISION h: SPECIAL INTEREST AND HOBBY GROUPS, ON FORM 3* (N = 107)

Creative Activities	Special Interest and Hobby Groups					Row Totals
	1. No-not needed	2. Not sure	3. Yes-definite need but no current provision	4. Yes-current provision is inadequate	5. Current provision is adequate	
1. No - not needed	10	3	1	1	0	15
2. Not sure	3	7	3	0	1	14
3. Yes - definite need but no current provision	1	6	50	3	1	61
4. Yes - current provision is inadequate	0	1	3	6	0	10
5. Current provision is adequate	0	0	2	0	5	7
Column Totals	14	17	59	10	7	107

* See Table 4.4.

It is easy to see in Table 4.6 that headmasters who selected *Yes - definite need but no current provision* for f. were also likely to select the same response for provision h, and that the same comment can be made with regard to other cells on the diagonal from top-left to bottom-right of the Table.

Of all the cross-tabulations compiled for items in Form 3 of the questionnaire, this one revealed the strongest relationship. It makes good sense in terms of the titles, which have somewhat the same meaning - *hobby groups* and *creative activities* are more similar than, for example, *hobby groups* and *afternoon snack*. Similarly, the relationships among items d, e, g and among f, h, i are greater than between say d and f, which suggests that it may be possible to make general statements about *two kinds* of provision rather than six particular provisions.

Perhaps the main observation that may be made about items d, e and g are that they are the more traditional and well-known forms of community activity - scouts, sporting clubs and libraries are somewhat typical features of Australian communities. Headmasters had fairly definite views about them (very few were "not sure") and about one third of the communities (more than other provisions) were reported to be adequately served.

The other items, f, h, and i, seem to represent activities that give more opportunity for personal expression and development as distinct from the more traditional emphases on discipline, service, competition and intellectual pursuits. Although there was some uncertainty and there were some communities considered to be not in need of such provisions, approximately 55 per cent of the respondents observed that in the community served by their school there was a definite need and no current provision.

It should be remembered that responses to this questionnaire involved both *observation* and *attitudes* of headmasters, not only where particular questions called for either an observation or an opinion, but also because even supposedly objective observations were inevitably coloured by attitudes. A clear example of a situation where this may occur is where respondents have indicated that particular provisions are *adequate* or *inadequate*, a possible reason for the difference being that the former have a less favourable opinion of the usefulness, and therefore a weaker perception of need, than the latter. Similarly, a "not needed" response may be an indication of community circumstances *and* attitudes of the observer -

i. no need plus dislike the idea anyway; or

ii. like the idea but no need; or

iii. actually a need but observer would prefer an alternative provision.

A further breakdown of responses from the point of view of headmasters' attitudes to the items under discussion is provided in Table 4.7

TABLE 4.7: HEADMASTERS' ATTITUDES TO QUESTIONS ON NEED AND PROVISION OF SIX SELECTED FACILITIES FROM FORM 3*

Facility	Combined Responses*	
	Supportive Attitude (Categories 3 & 4)	Attitude Indeterminate (Categories 1, 2 & 5)
d. Clubs	49	59
e. Physical Activities	40	68
g. Library	50	58
	Mean = 46	Mean = 62
f. Creative Activities	71	36
h. Special interest and hobby groups	70	39
i. Recreation Worker	65	43
	Mean = 69	Mean = 39

* See Table 4.4.

The general conclusion thus far would be that many headmasters recognise a need for a new look at the kinds of provisions that are needed for children in primary school age. Their preferences reflect an increasing concern that children should develop their own interests and should engage in activities that are expressive and enjoyable. There is not a strong expression of opposition to the traditional emphases on clubs and sports, but rather an indication that these additional provisions should now be considered.

Academic Retardation. Although cultural deprivation was weighted most seriously in Table 4.5, the total number of respondents indicating a problem to be *moderate, considerable* or *serious* was greatest for item 4, Academic Retardation. It is tempting to regard these two problems as different terms for the one phenomenon, but some headmasters distinguished between them as is evident in Table 4.8. Fifty per cent of the responses were in the same (diagonal) cells for both variables and the other 50 per cent gave a different response for the two problems. Further, those who gave the same response to both problems could still have regarded them as different.

TABLE 4.8: CROSS-TABULATION OF HEADMASTERS' RESPONSES TO PROBLEM 4: ACADEMIC RETARDATION AND RESPONSES TO PROBLEM 10: CULTURAL DEPRIVATION ON FORM 4* (N = 104)

Academic Retardation	Cultural Deprivation				Row Totals
	1. Minimal	2. Moderate	3. Considerable	4. Serious	
1. Minimal	16	4	3	0	23
2. Moderate	5	17	15	4	41
3. Considerable	2	5	16	9	32
4. Serious	0	0	4	4	8
Column Totals	23	26	38	17	104

* See Table 4.5.

A question which could be raised, to be pondered rather than answered, is what implications there may be in the fact that so many headmasters reported academic retardation to be a problem. Cultural deprivation may be seen as concern for the quality of life experienced at home and in general. Academic retardation, although obviously related to the richness of the cultural environment, would seem to be more directly related to the school itself.

Retardation implies delayed development or educational backwardness *relative to others* in the population. If *all* children were dull or retarded according to our present standards then their level of ability would seem normal. In most real situations there is a *range* of ability in which some children are retarded in comparison with the average. When headmasters report that academic retardation is a problem do they mean -

i. that they have their *normal* quota of children with below average ability, and these are a problem; or
ii. that their quota of retarded children is greater than is found in a typical school; or
iii. that at least some children are suffering from the shortcomings of previous or present teachers, and they are not achieving as well as their natural ability would allow?

It could be argued that academic retardation should not be regarded as a *problem* by teachers. It is the job of the teacher to provide a situation which enables each child to learn to the best of his ability and potential, whatever stage the child has reached when the teacher first becomes responsible for him. If retarded children are a *problem* it *could* reflect on the professional skills and attitudes of the teachers. However, in the present survey it was the *questionnaire* which referred to retardation as a "problem" and it is simply worth noting that of all the problems listed it was the one that concerned the greatest number of headmasters, including 8 who regarded it as serious.

Social Workers. Of the items listed in Table 4.4 a particular group (f, g, i) has been singled out as representing what appears to be a need for a newer type of recreational programme, one which encourages a greater degree of personal expression than the more traditional clubs, sports and libraries. Next in order of items for which there is perceived a 'definite need but no current provision' is j: Social Worker.

Forty-two headmasters responded as above, and 8 others said that the current provision was inadequate. The relatively large number (25) who were 'not sure' suggests either that they were not sure what sort of work social workers are able to do, or else that they did not know enough about the community in which they work to make a definite judgment.

Taking the responses to item j. in conjunction with those to item i. (Recreation Worker) it would be reasonable to expect considerable support for any proposal to make available in these communities persons with joint responsibility in the fields of recreation and social welfare. This could be even more so if a positive rather than a remedial role were envisaged, with imaginative plans for co-operation between schools and other community agencies which conduct programmes for children.

Other Problems and Needs. The reader may derive further information by examining Tables 4.4 and 4.5. There seems no need to discuss every item in the manner of the preceding sub-sections of this chapter. Quite a large number of headmasters reported *emotional deprivation* and *one-parent families* as being factors which characterised the communities in which their schools operate. *Vandalism* was considered to be serious in a few areas. *Speech defects* were rather prevalent.

Summary

This chapter is an attempt to present a general picture of the well-being of primary school children in Western Australia. Sources of information included newspapers, official statistics, and the comments and structured responses of headmasters. It appears that there is a wide range of circumstances among communities throughout the State in terms of the cultural opportunities provided for children. Although the figures are estimates with considerable scope for error, the 1973 survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicated that 5,400 families in Western Australia make no arrangements for their primary school children out of school hours. This could represent approximately 10,000 children. Headmasters held the opinion that cultural deprivation and academic retardation are the most serious problems. They appear to be somewhat independent of whether a parent is at home after school. There was strong indication of a "definite need" for provisions relating to creative activities, hobby groups, and recreation and social workers.

5. CHILDREN UNDER SUPERVISION

Planning Social Action

It would be neat and tidy to be able to assume that a thorough analysis of needs would lead inexorably to a set of remedies. Although it is unquestionable that remedies must bear some relationship to needs the relationship is not simple, and new issues arise when the focus of consideration is moved from needs to remedies.

Suppose for the moment that there is a need, in various places and for various reasons, for some sort of supervision of children beyond that currently provided by schools, parents and other agencies. Several kinds of problems could be encountered in any planning exercise designed to meet such a need.

Firstly, whatever the actual need in a particular community may be, it often happens in practice that proposals for social action will come from officials, citizens, activists, lobbyists or honest do-gooders whose perceptions, values, habits, thought processes, style of speech, level of education and personal mannerisms have been acquired in a different community. A child care enterprise embodying the best possible qualities and motives when viewed from the vantage point of the organiser may be a complete failure because the local citizens suspect or detect an attitude of condescension towards local cultural mores.

One headmaster considered that:

> *Teacher - welfare workers* are needed desperately at the primary level to help children taking the wrong track get back on the right track. These people are "confidants" without the authority or charisma of a social welfare officer. These latter workers are "threats" to family security and their work is resented largely by parents. A teacher-welfare worker poses no threat to the family unit - he/she is a "friend".

Another, with regard to a rural community, commented that:

> Educational problems arise from the difficulty of convincing parents that a particular problem exists...However an outsider such as a Recreation Worker would need to exercise extreme caution if he was to be effective.

Finally, in an area which the headmaster considered was in a very deprived condition:

> Resistance to authority is marked. The [Council] is held in very poor regard and police, welfare officers and teachers are viewed with suspicion. A teacher's motives are often questioned because a parent doubts that teachers are really interested in the welfare of children.

Secondly, although it is easy to recognise problems in the motives of altruism and to accuse "do-gooders" of interfering with the lives of other people, it can also be argued, and perhaps demonstrated, that some communities are in such a disadvantaged and depressed condition that their members are not able to take any action to improve their circumstances. Cultural sub-groups do not usually change their way of life suddenly or easily and it may seem unthinkable to a person that his lot in life could be any different from what it is.

A headmaster referring to an inner urban area of "completely disadvantaged families" says:

> The present residents have no 'voice' to complain. Re-development with a variety of housing would automatically include in the community the normal amount of leadership which is not totally lacking. The parent body of this school is completely co-operative, although inert. They would, however, show suspicion and correctly resist any imposition of out of school care which *appeared* to infringe human and family rights.

There already are provisions in law for the removal of children from their parents where there is evidence of serious neglect. Many other laws are enacted for the protection of citizens whether they appreciate it or not, for example quarantine laws. An obvious example closer to this study is that of compulsory education - an imposition, an interference with parental prerogatives, or a *benefit* to be received by all whether they like it or not? In the field of child care the pertinence of this discussion is that -

i. some communities may not welcome child care programmes and any that are offered will fail;
ii. some communities may be so obviously in need that they should be legally committed to accepting assistance.

There probably is no absolute and unequivocal distinction between assistance and interference in the field of social welfare and in practice an important objective should be to exercise the greatest possible wisdom and sensitivity in launching and administering such programmes.

Thirdly, it need not be assumed that the problems of altruism and interference would arise to frustrate *all* efforts to provide programmes for children out of school hours. Nevertheless, several projects attempted in Western Australia in recent years have already failed or are continuing to operate with very small numbers of children even in areas where public commentators and folk knowledge would indicate there is a definite need. Some of the kinds of problems which may account for these failures are briefly described below.

1. The location of a centre may be unsuitable. For example, it has been found that if a school is used it often fails to hold those children who unfavourably associate the after school programme with the formal school programme, but if another location is used the children may be distracted in transit from the school to the centre and may fail to arrive.
2. Each centre may take on a particular social status, especially if it operates with a relatively small number of children, and it may become socially unacceptable for some parents or children to support it. In one centre, for example, it was assumed that the programme was specifically for children of working mothers and when some children of non-working mothers tried to attend they were ostracised by the other children.
3. Where children are not compelled to attend, and especially where parents are indifferent, the success of a project can depend very heavily on the ability and acceptability of the staff. Unfortunately, voluntary workers are often identified as belonging to particular organisations which may not be accepted by the families the workers are trying to reach.

4. Where success is measured in terms of the number of children who attend, a programme which is thought to be succeeding may in fact be catering for children who scarcely need it, while children for whom the programme is intended are not attracted to it. The concept of *need* is of course one that can be debated and analysed at length. All that is meant here is that provisions *intended* for certain categories of children may in fact be utilised only by others*. It was possible to detect in the responses of headmasters the belief that:

> In all areas or localities, voluntary organisations such as youth clubs, guides and scouts are patronised by families whose children already receive the benefits of a well organised and happy home life. The anti-social or other children most urgently requiring supervision and assistance tend to shy away from these organisations.

Another headmaster concerned with the same problems stated that:

> It seems apparent that those children who already participate in clubs and activities are those from families where parents are already interested and concerned with their children's after-school occupation. It appears that those who need these activities are not given the opportunity to participate.

Fourthly, an obvious danger in large scale planning is that of completely overlooking a locally desirable course of action. Plans are unavoidably made in the context of terms of reference, assumptions and facts which at the time are the best available to the planners. Even given a certain set of premises it takes rigorous and creative thought to ensure that all possible courses of action are taken into consideration before decisions are made. Equally important is the fact that no single, global research programme no matter how large and copiously funded, can adequately describe the exact and specific needs of particular local communities and families throughout the nation. A general statistic based on responses to a survey administered to a sample of subjects representing millions of families cannot be used to prescribe the specific child care requirements of the family living in the third house from the corner. In any case, if the needs of a local community change with the passing of time, as they must, a one-shot survey cannot be the source of guidance for a continuing programme.

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* Of the statements in Form 5 of the survey questionnaire one of the most strongly supported was number 11: *One of the main problems in any child care programme would be that of attracting the children who need it most.* The responses of headmasters were as follows: Strongly agree, 47; Generally agree, 47; Unimportant, irrelevant, uncertain, 9; Generally disagree, 6; Strongly disagree, 1.

It seems imperative therefore that any assistance from Government in the field of child supervision should be provided according to a formula that permits both -

i. equitable distribution, which itself is a difficult notion to define and apply; and

ii. maximal flexibility, to accommodate the great variety of life styles, values, personalities and home and community circumstances that are found in Australia.

To achieve the second of these will require a larger measure of local initiative to ensure that provisions are both relevant and likely to receive local support. However, even local initiatives can lack wisdom, skill, relevance and support and probably require a structural or general framework, inspired and launched at state or national Government level, from which they can derive advice, encouragement and financial and practical support.

The Problem Approach

To speak of *solutions* implies that there are *problems*. Undoubtedly there *are* problems, real and pressing in some communities, but there is room for discussion on the question of whether *problem solving* should be the only or main motive for the provision of child care programmes.

A youth worker in a Perth suburb was reported in the *Daily News*, 29th March 1973 as advocating a comprehensive programme of youth education which included teachers at local schools being "paid to stay back after 3.30 p.m. and work with young people in creative, sporting and study activities". The motivation for the programme was the prevalence of juvenile violence. This was associated with lack of parental supervision, a mixed migrant population and many broken homes:

> If we start in the primary schools now I think we can do much to solve the problems of the area'...The extent of youth work in [the area] now was 'pathetic in comparison to the extent of the problem.

This is a clear example of what could be called the *problem approach*. It is obviously commendable that somebody was trying to do something about a problem which was gaining public attention. But this should not obscure the fact that to gain public support for any kind of youth education programme it was probably necessary to express the need in terms of a problem that had to be solved.

Local funding arrangements are subject to the scrutiny of councillors who also have to report to their constituents on the kilometres of roads, footpaths and drains that are still waiting for attention. Any programme that is both new and funded by local rates and taxes must justify itself in the most concrete possible terms. A programme that can point to a 40 per cent reduction in vandalism will attract greater sympathy than a programme that expands the cultural horizons of local children who would be happy and harmless even without it.

It may be possible, in principle, to classify social programmes according to the perceptions or motives of those who initiate them. Although in practice a programme may serve several purposes, its emphasis may be in either problem-solving, problem prevention, social obligation or positive idealism. Programmes falling into any of these categories may be further described in terms of the depth or radicalism with which they seek to change society or particular institutions. A similar dimension concerns the question of whether the programme is aimed primarily at *sources* or *symptoms*, though the distinction may not always be clear. Another, related to those already mentioned, concerns the sheer *size* of a programme.

A programme aimed at transforming a complete inner-city area because crime had reached uncontrollable proportions would be a large-scale, radical, problem-solving programme aimed at removing the supposed source in the hope that the symptoms would disappear. A programme of installing stronger windows on buildings and organising elaborate watching services to reduce petty thieving would be symptom-oriented and short-term rather than radical.

The Australian, 27th March 1974 was ambivalent in referring firstly to "the *problem* of the latchkey children", secondly to "the latchkey-child *situation*" which is "really quite easy to resolve", (problem prevention?) thirdly to the fact that the situation suggests a strong moral duty to make society "a little more easy for its inhabitants" (social obligation), and fourthly to the desirability of making the experience of the latchkey child "a creative one and certainly a safe, protected period instead of the hit-or-miss gamble with the outside world..." (positive idealism).

The easy solution suggested by *The Australian* Editorial was as follows:

> All the latchkey school child basically requires is a modicum of non-institutionalised supervision of his leisure time for two or three hours a day. In the average Australian suburban community, this ought to be an ideal part-time job for anyone who can handle children. There must be plenty of forceful people in their fifties who could do it.

This is clearly a vacuum-filling approach - there is a situation that social obligation and common sense demand should be resolved by action that is entailed by a simple analysis of the facts.

One respondent to the questionnaire in this survey took a more serious line. He recognised widespread and deep-seated problems relating to the environment in which many children are reared and considered that radical, large-scale remedies are required to deal with the sources and not merely the symptoms. The issues were seen to be much broader and more diffuse than the simple concept of a time discrepancy between the hours of schooling and employment:

> No programme will succeed unless poverty within the community is overcome. Poverty is the basic cause of so much social and emotional maladjustment within the community. The social spectrum is constantly widening, the rich, as ever, becoming richer, and the poor, relatively poorer. It is becoming increasingly obvious that if the poor are to obtain social justice a definite redistribution of income will have to occur. Children reared in deprived economic circumstances carry the scars for the remainder of their lives, and have the greatest difficulty in overcoming the emotional and social disabilities which are a natural result of their being nurtured in a highly disadvantaged environment. It is an unfortunate fact that children raised in poverty tend to regenerate these conditions in adulthood and procreate and nurture their own children in similar circumstances. This is a vicious and unrelenting cycle of events and poverty within the community must be destroyed if it is to be remedied. Any programme which ignores this fundamental issue is doomed to failure.
>
> The whole policy of the State Housing Commission in settling larger numbers of disadvantaged families in low cost rental homes of poor quality in a given area is a social disaster of the first magnitude, and creates nothing other than an economic and social ghetto. This fact should be obvious to any person with a minimum of intelligence, but it appears to escape the understanding of the State Housing Commission and the various Housing Ministers of the State Parliaments. Low cost, poor quality State Housing Commission homes should not exist. All State Housing Commission housing should be of good quality, and not built in large blocks but carefully interspersed throughout the home ownership areas of the community, so providing a normal social spectrum throughout the community. The policy pursued by the State Housing Commission has been responsible for congregating large numbers of disadvantaged children in certain schools, with all of its attendant problems. These children, interspersed throughout the community, would be better served by attending normal schools and so gain greatly by social intercourse with children nurtured in homes with a higher social profile.

Another respondent expressed a similar concern. There was a need for radical, large scale action mainly to prevent the development of serious social ills:

> The inner urban area requires transformation if serious social ills are not to become soon and expensively evident. It is easy to criticise councils for overprovision of organised recreational areas and a complete lack of unstructured play areas. The Education Department is equally at fault in providing completely inadequate areas for schools.
>
> It seems to be that the housing policy is the 'core' of the problem. The State Housing Commission is doing a job of providing cheap rental for one parent families. However, these families are being lumped together with none of the neighbourly co-operation and leadership available in *better* areas. (Perhaps residents in 'better' areas suffer from neuroses which would be cured by opportunities for this sort of 'neighbourliness'?)
>
> My experience with the completely disadvantaged families of [this area]...suggests that immediate redevelopment would render unnecessary any future social 'plasters' provided by C.W.D., C.R.C., O.S.C.C.A., C.A.T.S. or P.O.D.*

The headmaster of a country school recognised a problem but was rather pessimistic about the prospects for its solution:

> I feel that the whole problem is an industrial problem. Employers and unions should make better arrangements. Teachers should not really have to become baby sitters. The children of this country town are in many cases sick through neglect and I do not really think any amount of funds or planning will correct the problem. Parents want the dollar rather than looking after their children.
>
> Parents obviously are not going to change their way of life therefore school teachers and others prepared to work will do their best but I think they will not really succeed.
>
> In this community all workers would have to be paid as few would volunteer otherwise. However, there is a definite need in this town and plenty of facilities which could be used although equipment would be needed.

A reporter in *The Australian*, 28th March 1974 seemed to be confused when he described:

> ...A plan for mothers to run pre-school centres for up to six children in their own homes (which) has been prepared as a cheap method of accommodating 92,000 latchkey children in Australia.

The plan had been proposed by Professor Hugh Philp of Macquarie University as "a crash programme of pre-school education at relatively low cost". The term 'latchkey' has elsewhere referred only to school children, but Philp's proposal related to pre-school children, though the idea could well be considered as a formula for caring for children out of school hours.

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* Community Welfare Department, Community Recreation Council, Out of School Child Care Association, Children's Activities Time Society, Playgroups on Demand.

In the same article it was reported that:

> In Queensland, the State A.L.P's education spokesman, Mr Peter Wood, said schools should be left open and parents and citizens' associations given money to care for latchkey children...The funds should be used to ensure the proper supervision of children who remained in the school.

This proposal, as reported here, leaves many questions unanswered, some of which are considered in Form 5 of the questionnaire. Similarly, many specifics are overlooked in *The West Australian* Editorial of 21st September 1973:

> There are more than enough schools, halls and pavilions that could be used as centres in a crash programme to provide supervised facilities for latchkey children. The money to staff and equip them could be provided by the mothers themselves, their employers and State and Federal authorities. Unions, too, should take an active role.

The list of suggested contributors to the programme seems to include just about everybody. Although it is desirable to cast the net wide in the search for contributors a lot more thought would be required to determine *how* and *in what circumstances* the various parties could be involved.

Two solutions of a different kind have been proposed by various people and were considered in Form 5 of the questionnaire. Both of them appear to pertain to the *source* rather than the *symptoms* of children lacking supervision out of school. They would also be somewhat radical concepts in Australia at the present time, and there may be serious practical objections, and perhaps philosophical objections as well.

The *Sunday Times*, 9th September 1973, in an article by Leslie Anderson, raised the issue of flexible working hours in the context of the problems of deserted husbands:

> Larger industries could split shifts for lone parents. If a man could work from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. he could see his children off to school and clean up the house in the morning. He could be home by 3.30 when his children came home from school. Provided that his eldest child is at least 13 years old and the children are not nervous at being left on their own, he could return to work after seeing the younger children off to bed. If they are nervous he would have to pay a baby sitter.

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The West Australian, in the Editorial of 21st September 1973 saw this as a possible partial solution:

> Flexible working hours that would allow at least one parent to be home when the children were not at school would solve the problem for many working couples. But they would not remove the need for many more after-school centres than the one that exists at present.

On the matter of payments to mothers there is a wider variety of opinions. The Women's Electoral Lobby, as reported in *The West Australian*, 18th June 1973 was going to ask the Federal Government for a housewife's wage to replace child endowment. It was not, however, to be a wage to cover any number of children. The idea was to encourage parents to limit the size of families but at the same time make better provision for the children in their early years by providing a wage greater than child endowment.

The Churches of Christ were reported in April 1974 as wanting mothers who were forced to work for economic reasons to be paid more child endowment so that they could stay home if they wished. They strongly encouraged the idea of motherhood as the priority career, particularly during the first four years of a child's life.

A contrary view was expressed by Lyndsay Connors in the *National Times*, 3rd-7th June 1974.

> Obviously the woman who is solely dependent on her own wages or on an inadequate wage does suffer true financial hardship during confinement and the time taken from work to care for her child, and we must be sure that she is looked after. But for many a working woman, the disadvantage of having children cannot be overcome by cash - they have taken the form of loss of personal freedom through being unable to re-enter the work force when she wants to, either because of the loss of skills, or seniority and particularly through the lack of acceptable child-minding facilities. These are the setbacks which are being gradually overcome - very gradually in most areas of the workforce.

The questionnaire asked headmasters to agree or disagree with the statements:

> Flexible working hours should be a normal condition of employment to allow at least one parent to supervise children before and after school. (Item 7)
>
> Funds should be given to enable parents to care for their own children. (Item 13)

On these two proposals, flexible working hours and money for parents, the responses to the questionnaire differed widely, with flexible hours gaining strong agreement and payments to parents equally strong disagreement from headmasters. The details are presented in Table 6.7, Chapter 6, where the proposals are discussed in the context of other statements relating to the involvement of schools in the care of children. Flexible working hours is a relatively simple concept which makes good sense provided practical organisational problems could be overcome by employers. Payments to parents seems to raise more complex problems, as some of the following headmasters' comments suggest, and as has already been indicated in the articles quoted above:

- The provision of additional funds to be handled by parents would not generally be of any benefit to the children. It has been my experience that families which appear most urgently in need of extra financial assistance require assistance in how to manage finances rather than the receipt of additional funds. Note the drinking, gambling etc. on endowment and other hand-out days in both European and Aboriginal families. Locally, the funds available to Aboriginal families appear to have created more problems than any immediate benefit.

- I strongly support the notion that mothers need encouragement (monetary, if necessary) to stay at home and create an environment conducive to allowing children to grow up in a free and natural way.

- Definitely not! Properly staffed and equipped day care centres should be provided.

- Some exceptions: (a) children of single parents, mothers or fathers; (b) where there is evidence of illness or incompetence coupled with inadequate financial means to hire assistance.

- Parents who don't care for their children are not necessarily the "poor" ones.

- On a needs basis, this could be a suitable alternative to the institutional concept of day-long care at school.

It hardly needs to be added that the concept of a mother's wage was not favoured by many headmasters. More generally, it seems that although *problem solving* may be the approach that is likely to be adopted by people who are hard pressed to account for their use of public money, the subject of this report may be better seen as an opportunity to improve society's provision for its school age children.

Agencies and Institutions

For the purpose of this report it is assumed that primary school children out of school hours may be occupied in one of the following circumstances, none of which depends on whether the parent is at home or at work -

i. at home;
ii. at school;
iii. in a situation organised by another agency or institution;
iv. somewhere else chosen by the child itself.

In Western Australia there is no comprehensive system for occupying children's time other than the school system itself. It would seem somewhat obvious that as schoolsare already institutionalised for the purpose of keeping children occupied for a large part of the day then if it is necessary to extend the time in which this occurs the logical step is to keep schools functioning for a longer period - each day as well as in vacations - where parents are not available to look after their own children.

There are at least two reasons why in practice this does not seem to be a development unanimously supported in the community.

1. A significant proportion of parents still believe that they have an obligation to be available to their children for some daylight hours each day. As the evidence quoted in the previous section suggests, many teachers are included in this category.
2. It can plausibly be argued that the somewhat intensive programme in the conventional school could not be extended in time without placing undue strain on children as well as teachers. To broaden the role of the school to include child-minding seems to many people incongruous - school just isn't like that - children need a change from the formal environment.

However, these considerations are obstacles not only to the extension of school hours, even for *some* children, but they are also deterrents to the viability of *any* comprehensive system of care for primary school children. In addition, any scheme to be established beyond the school has to cope with the fact -

i. that it must operate without the support of the law with regard to attendance;

ii. that because children have spent most of the day in a highly organised setting they are likely to prefer for the rest of the day a time of freedom and relaxation with peers of their own choice;

iii. that time and continuity are already lost if children have to walk or commute from school to another place;

iv. that the activities and forms of discipline and organisation likely to be effective in the child-care situation will depend very much on how children have adapted or reacted to the methods employed at school, with its vastly greater institutional power and contact time.

The purpose of this section is to document some of the kinds of arrangements that are provided for children out of school in Western Australia. The provisions fall into two broad categories - clubs and sports which children attend once or twice a week, often on a seasonal basis; and child-care arrangements specifically established to care for children each day between school time and evening.

Pupil Activities. Form 2 of the questionnaire to headmasters was headed: *Agencies other than school or home.* The instructions were:

> List all facilities, activities, or supervision arrangements, other than those provided by school or home, that are available to children enrolled in your school. Clubs, little athletics, child care centres, etc., would be included. To compile the list, find out and record the provisions used by children *this week* or, if the week is atypical, any recent, typical, period of five different school days.

Pupil activities is the total number of pupils reported as having been involved in any activities during the week. Two pupils who attend club twice equals four pupil activities. A global picture of children's activities is presented in Table 5.1

TABLE 5.1: PUPIL ACTIVITIES OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CONDUCTED BY AGENCIES OTHER THAN SCHOOL OR HOME - FOR ONE WEEK BY SIZE OF SCHOOL

Size of schools - number of teachers	Number of schools in sample (1)	Total number of pupils in sample schools (2)	Possible number of pupil activities - 5 x Col. (2) (3) *	Total number of actual pupil activities arranged by other agencies (Form 2) (4) **	Pupil activities as % of possible pupil activities - Col. (5)/ Col. (4) (5)
1-2	29	1008	5040	264	5.2%
3-4	17	1320	6600	240	3.6%
5-9	18	3923	19615	1924	9.8%
10-18	33	13690	68450	6765	9.9%
19-23	13	8001	40005	3998	10.0%
Total	110	27942	139710	13191	9.4%

* The number of possible pupil-activities in a week (column 3) was calculated by multiplying the number of pupils in sample schools (column 2) by 5 (days in a week). This does not imply that total provision (all children every day) is either feasible or ideal; it is, nevertheless, a baseline figure which is logically relevant to the subject of caring for children out of school hours and permits a comparison between schools of various sizes.

** Each instance of a pupil attending an activity on a school day was counted as one pupil activity regardless of the length of the activity.

The point that is immediately noticeable (column 5) is that it is the *larger* schools which have more children who attend activities organised by bodies outside the school. Several possible reasons were suggested in Chapter 6 as to why teacher of smaller schools were more likely to be engaged in out of school activities with their pupils. Similarly it may be surmised that whereas in a small centre there may be one or two citizens interested in conducting a club or association of some kind, in larger communities it is probable, simply because of the greater numbers, that a greater *variety* of services will be available.

Table 5.2 presents a summary of the pupil activities organised by schools and by other agencies, with data calculated as described above for Table 5.1. The data relating to schools (column 1) are taken from Chapter 6 (Table 6.6).

TABLE 5.2: PUPIL ACTIVITIES OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS ORGANISED BY SCHOOL AND NON-SCHOOL PERSONNEL - BY SIZE OF SCHOOL - IN ONE WEEK

Size of school - number of teachers	Activities arranged by school staff - actual pupil activities as % of possible * (1)	Activities arranged by other agencies - actual pupil activities as % of possible ** (2)	Total number of actual pupil activities - as % of possible (Cols. 1+2) (3)
1-2	9.8%	5.2%	15.0%
3-4	7.6%	3.6%	11.2%
5-9	4.8%	9.8%	14.6%
10-18	6.7%	9.9%	16.6%
19-23	5.4%	10.0%	15.4%
All Schools:	6.2%	9.4%	15.6%

* From Table 6.6, column 5.

** From Table 5.1, column 5.

Relative to the subject of this report - children out of school on school days - the gross effort would appear to be something like 15.6 per cent of that required if *all* children were to be supervised between 3.30 p.m. and tea time every school day. But, for reasons discussed elsewhere in this report, it is virtually impossible to determine in a large survey what the *actual need* would be, for *need* would mean quite different things in different local communities.

The information presented here and in the next chapter is simply a gross estimate of the contribution already being made by schools and others in the hours after school. It could indicate that there are considerable resources in the community already devoted to meeting the requirements of children out of school hours, and that the main outstanding need is for better co-ordination among those persons and agencies seeking to work in this area.

The activities listed by headmasters, whether provided by schools or by other organisations, and including those undertaken at nights and weekends (though these were not included in the statistics) as well as after school, are as follows:

football, soccer, netball, hockey, athletics, swimming, cricket, rugby, gymnastics, softball, tennis, volley ball, judo, badminton, squash, golf, shooting, skiing, lacrosse, cycling, boxing, Cubs, Brownies, Scouts, Guides, piano lessons, ballet, choir, modelling, Outdoor Activities Club, reek lessons, Italian lessons, tap dancing, ballroom dancing, craft, pool, horseriding, Golden Girls, Adventurers, Christian Endeavour, chess, calisthenics, Girls' Brigade, Boys' Brigade, ambulance, Police Boys, Pathfinders, Guild of Young Actors, art lessons, band, Young Peoples League, Sea Scouts, recorder playing, television (provided in one school daily 8.00-9.45 a.m.), marching girls, Y.M.C.A., stamp collectors club, pottery, after school play centre, Nippers' Association, guitar lessons and Electric Car Club.

A question which remains unanswered is whether many of these which are conducted in the evenings and at weekends could be extended to become more closely associated with the schools. Or, to put the question another way, could the schools expand their vision to provide more of these kinds of activities as part of their regular programme. It is not suggested that evenings and weekends are unsuitable times for the activities, or that the voluntary activities should be brought under a greater degree of central co-ordination, but it is at least possible that -

i. school programmes could in many instances include a very much broader range of cultural and recreational activities than they do at present;
ii. school premises could be designed to encourage their use by voluntary agencies;
iii. schools could play a more positive role in helping to ensure that children are aware of the opportunities for such activities within their own communities;
iv. where there is not already a co-ordinating body for children's community activities the school staff, or a school council, or somebody associated with the school, should be responsible for taking action to ensure that their locality is not neglected in the provision of amenities, facilities and services.

Child-Care Organisations. The clubs catering for children's interests, as listed in the previous sub-section, typically function for one or two evenings or afternoons per week. Organisations specifically concerned with the *daily* provision of facilities after school are very rare indeed.

A few projects have been launched in recent years by concerned and energetic citizens. Some have been commenced after what must be described as very careful thought and considerable preparation. The numbers of voluntary helpers was in some cases more than adequate. Yet with rare exceptions these individual attempts to provide some sort of betterment for children in the neighbourhood have closed down for one or more of the kinds of reasons discussed in the first section of this chapter.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the post-mortem reports of these projects is that most of them mention a lack of support and co-operation from parents. This would seem somewhat incredible if it could be assumed that the projects were established to cater for a real need and that parents have any conscience about the welfare of their own children. The post-mortems do not extend to an analysis of why parents do not co-operate, with the result that the reader is left with the assumption that parents are blameworthy for the situation. Even if they are neglectful of their children, this conclusion does not lead to action likely to improve the situation. Very sensitive relationships are involved where the welfare of children is concerned.

The most promising group in Western Australia at the time of writing is the *Out of School Child Care Association of Western Australia*, though it has not, itself, conducted facilities for the care of children.

The Out of School Care Association was formed in 1973 at an inaugural meeting with representatives from the Council of Social Services, Education Department, Teachers' Union, Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations, Community Welfare, Western Australian Institute of Technology, University of Western Australia, Local Government Association, Children's Activity Time Service, Churches, Young Women's Christian Association, Young Men's Christian Association, and Emergency Housekeepers.

After two years of functioning on a very limited budget and part-time staffing, the Out of School Child Care Association has now been funded by the Children's Commission for the purpose of appointing a full-time secretariat.

The main purpose of the Out of School Child Care Association is to become a clearing house for information and a co-ordinating body in matters relating to out of school care. It endeavours to stimulate interest and awareness in the community and to assist those who may be contemplating local action in

in the area of child care. However, it is a young organisation with enthusiastic supporters and its functions could expand if financial resources were available.

Summary

The planning of social action is fraught with obstacles mainly relating to the fact that people have to preserve their own independence and dignity. One approach that is likely to fail is the *problem* approach, in which a programme of social welfare carries with it the implication that the citizens of the community concerned have somehow failed to live up to somebody's else's standards. Nevertheless, there are also other reasons why voluntary and isolated projects can fail to gain community support. Many children attend a great variety of clubs and activities each week, but it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which these relate to the needs of children who do not have parents at home after school.

6. CHILDREN UNDER SUPERVISION - AT SCHOOL

School as a Child-Minder

One of the most important facts about schools is that they keep children occupied under supervision for up to 35 hours per week for approximately 40 weeks each year. This function of the school does not receive much attention in discussions of the school programme. Teachers, administrators, parents and children all assume that the purpose of the school is to educate children and not merely to keep them off the streets or release parents from the burden of having them at home. The fact remains, however, that this incidental or implicit function is itself of great social importance.

A related fact is that the school's supervision of children does not coincide entirely with normal hours of employment. The 35 hours mentioned above includes lunch and recess times and a few minutes before and after official school hours. There is a period of time before and after school during which parents in full-time employment are at work or travelling to and from their place of work. For many parents this is an awkward arrangement for the simple reason that the school has custody of their children for nearly but not quite the whole day.

The issues are different from those occurring in connection with day care or the full-time minding of children younger than school age. Given that a parent has seen fit, for various reasons discussed elsewhere, to entrust a young child to a day care centre and take employment, it can generally be assumed that the child is under supervision for the whole day. Depending on the economic circumstances of the family or the strength of the work motive of the responsible parent, the family may be faced with serious decisions or even drastic alternatives as they face the situation of their children entering primary school.

Some parents have tried to under-state their child's age to postpone the day when the full-time services of day care centres will no longer be available. When the child commences school he not only has to cope with a more formal situation but may also be faced with new problems at home. Where the parent continues full-time employment, and in the absence of organised free time centres, the problem of what is to be done with the child during the time before and after school when the parent is not at home must be faced.

Teachers Out of School

One component of the present study was an attempt to gain some indication of the extent to which State schools and teachers in Western Australia engaged in the supervision of children beyond the requirements of compulsory school hours. Form 1 of the survey document was headed as follows:

> Provide details of activities where school staff who because of their involvement with pupils are providing supervision outside formal school hours. "Supervision" may include formal sporting or cultural activities, informal arrangements for children to use school facilities and so on. For this purpose, make an inventory below of provisions made by your school *this week* or, if the week is atypical, any recent, typical, period of five different school days.

Teachers' hours were calculated by simply summing the hours reported in the column headed "No. Staff Involved" on Form 1. For example, the one teacher may have been involved in four different activities during the week for a total of six hours.

As a base line for making some kind of assessment of the contribution of teachers out of school hours an arbitrary assumption is made here that 3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. each afternoon would represent 100 per cent. One and a half hours per day for 5 days per week equals 7.5 hours per week. Table 6.1 presents a summary of headmasters' responses to Form 1.

TABLE 6.1: SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS - TEACHER HOURS IN ONE WEEK BY SIZE OF SCHOOL

Size of school - number of teachers	Number of schools in sample (1)	Total number of teachers in sample schools (2)	Possible hours supervision by all teachers - 7.5 x Col.(2) (3)	Total number of actual hours supervision by all teachers (4)	Teacher hours of supervision as % of possible hours - Col.(4)/Col.(3) (5)
1-2	29	46	345	75.4	22%
3-4	17	56	420	37.4	9%
5-9	18	138	1035	46.8	5%
10-18	33	460	3450	194.7	6%
19-23	13	271	2032	110.5	5%
Total:	110	971	7282	464.8	6.4%

Several facts may be read from the table.

1. In the week of the survey approximately 465 teacher hours (column 4) were spent on out of school activities with children. This pertains only to activities directly associated with the school. An additional contribution by teachers is their participation, as private individuals, in clubs and activities sponsored by agencies other than the school. Considering that the schools in the survey were 25 per cent of all State primary schools in Western Australia it is reasonable to assert that something like 1,860 teacher hours (465 x 4 were spent in supervising children throughout the State during one week. This is roughly equivalent to 47 full-time employees at 40 hours per week, which with a salary of $150 per week would be worth approximately $360,000 a year.
2. From the responses of headmasters it is evident that there is a greater involvement of teachers in the small schools than in the larger schools. Column 5 indicates a 22 per cent commitment of possible teacher hours in the smallest schools, 9 per cent in schools with 3-4 teachers, and 5 or 6 per cent in all larger schools.

A fact which is not apparent in Table 6.1 is that the involvement of teachers varies greatly from school to school whatever the size of school. There are, of course, many possible reasons for this. Married women teachers may have their own children to go home to and many teachers are involved with courses of study. One headmaster commented that:

> Under present conditions where 75 per cent of the staff are involved in gaining further qualifications it is very difficult to obtain teachers who are prepared to give extra time outside normal school hours.

He makes the additional comment:

> However if some form of payment was made I feel that many of these teachers would arrange their programme to give odd hours of service.

One headmaster even suggested that the amount of activity was affecting school work:

> Having so many after school activities severely hampers home work - particularly with young children who for example come home tired after gym classes.

The schools in the sample were also classified according to regions as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Table 6.2 presents a summary of teacher involvement in the same terms as are used in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.2: SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS - TEACHER HOURS IN ONE WEEK BY STATISTICAL REGION

Region	Number of schools in sample (1)	Total number of teachers in sample schools (2)	Possible hours supervision by all teachers - 7.5 x Col.(2) (3)	Total number of actual hours supervision by all teachers (4)	Teacher hours of supervision as % of possible hours - Col.(4)/Col.(3) (5)
Perth	53	678	5085	254	5%
South-West	12	87	652	31	6%
Central	2	8	60	8	13%
South Agric.	6	18	135	12	9%
Central Agric.	8	40	300	10	3%
North Agric.	13	44	330	60	18%
Eastern Goldfields	10	54	405	32	8%
Pilbara N.W.	5	33	247	48	19%
Kimberley	1	9	68	12	18%
Total:	110	971	7282	467	6.4%

An initial impression conveyed by Column 5 of Table 6.2 is that distance from Perth is related to contribution of teachers to free-time activities. The greatest contribution as a percentage of possible hours appears to occur in regions further from Perth. The number of teachers in some regions is too small to permit confident conclusions of this kind, but the trends do suggest that this relationship may be worth further consideration. This conclusion is more clearly supported by Table 6.3 where the Perth region is contrasted with all other regions.

TABLE 6.3: SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS - TEACHER HOURS IN ONE WEEK IN PERTH AND OTHER REGIONS

Region	Number of schools in sample (1)	Total number of teachers in sample schools (2)	Possible hours supervision by all teachers - 7.5 x Col.(2) (3)	Total number of actual hours supervision by all teachers (4)	Teacher hours of supervision as % of possible hours Col.(4)/Col.(3) (5)
Perth	53	678	5085	254	5.0%
Other	57	293	2197	213	9.7%
Total:	110	971	7282	467	6.4%

The question which remains unanswered concerns the relationship between *size* and *region*, for both of these seem to be related to involvement of teachers in free time supervision of children. Examination of Table 6.4 seems to reveal that both size and region contribute to the patterns of involvement apparent in Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3. The pattern in Table 6.1 relating to size of schools over the whole sample is repeated where the sample is divided into regions - a little ambiguously in the Perth region but strongly in the other regions. At the same time, there is a fairly consistent pattern of greater involvement in country areas within each class of schools defined by size. The only exception concerns schools with 3 to 4 teachers, in which class there were only 9 teachers in the Perth schools. In the next two categories, where the numbers of teachers in Perth and in other regions were larger, the country teachers were clearly in the lead with regard to teacher hours.

TABLE 6.4: SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS BY REGION AND SIZE OF SCHOOL

Size of school - number of teachers	Perth Region		Other Regions	
	Total number of teachers in sample schools	Teacher-hours of supervision as % of possible hours	Total number of teachers in sample schools	Teacher-hours of supervision as % of possible hours
1-2	6	6.7%	40	24.2%
3-4	9	11.9%	47	8.5%
5-9	84	3.5%	54	6.2%
10-18	348	5.0%	112	7.9%
19-23	231	5.3%	40	6.6%
Total:	678	5.0%	293	9.7%

Several reasons for the greater involvement of country teachers may be suggested without having made a particular study of the subject. In the city it is more probable that teachers live many miles from the school, that they are engaged in part-time study which entails attendance at other institutions, and that teachers and pupils have less sense of belonging to the same community than is often found in country areas. In country areas teachers are likely to be younger, more enthusiastic, with fewer commitments to their own family and anxious to build up a favourable reputation which will hasten their appointment to a city school. They are in an environment where they are highly visible and expected to engage in community service.

A final point in the discussion of teacher involvement concerns the situation in schools which have been classified by the Australian Schools Commission as *disadvantaged*. Among the schools selected for this study there were 7 classified as disadvantaged, all of them in the Perth region. Table 6.5 indicates that teachers on the average devote more time to assisting pupils in disadvantaged areas than in other areas. This relationship was consistent regardless of the size of the school.

No attempt is made here to explain this phenomenon. The number of disadvantaged schools is not large and the study has not been designed to provide more detailed information, but it is perhaps of interest in its own right that teachers in these schools are making a contribution beyond their formal duties.

TABLE 6.5: SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS IN DISADVANTAGED SCHOOLS - PERTH REGION

Schools	Number of schools in sample (1)	Total number of teachers in sample schools (2)	Possible hours supervision by all teachers - 7.5 x Col.(2) (3)	Total number of actual hours supervision by all teachers (4)	Teacher hours of supervision as % of possible hours - Col.(4)/Col.(3) (5)
Disadvantaged	7	90	675	58.8	8.7%
Others	46	588	4410	193.2	4.4%
Total Perth:	53	678	5085	252.0	5.0%

The second indication of the extent of teacher organised supervision of children in their free time was the number of *pupil activities* reported by headmasters as having occurred during the week of the survey. The information was reported on Form 1 and the general picture is presented in Column 5 of Table 6.6, which is very similar to that in Table 6.1, Column 5, which relates to teacher hours. The rank order of percentages is the same and the magnitudes are similar except for the smallest school.

TABLE 6.6: PUPIL ACTIVITIES OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS SUPERVISED BY SCHOOL STAFF IN ONE WEEK BY SIZE OF SCHOOL

Size of schools - number of teachers	Number of schools in sample (1)	Total number of pupils in sample schools (2)	Possible number of pupil activities* 5 x Col. (2) (3)	Total number of actual pupil activities arranged by other agencies (Form 1) (4) **	Pupil activities as % of possible pupil activities - Col. (5)/ Col. (4) (5)
1-2	29	1008	5040	493	9.8%
3-4	17	1320	6600	503	7.6%
5-9	18	3923	19615	948	4.8%
10-18	23	13690	68450	4580	6.7%
19-23	13	8001	40005	2173	5.4%
Total:	110	27942	139710	8697	6.2%

* The number of possible pupil-activities in a week (column 3) was calculated by multiplying the number of pupils in sample schools (column 2) by 5 (days in a week). This does not imply that total provision (all children every day) is either feasible or ideal; it is, nevertheless, a baseline figure which is logically relevant to the subject of caring for children out of school hours and permits a comparison between schools of various sizes.

** Each instance of a pupil attending an activity on a school day was counted as one pupil activity regardless of the length of the activity.

There is no ready-made criterion for assessing the value of these contributions to the welfare of children. It may be asserted that any educational activities performed by teachers beyond official school hours can be regarded, in the context of the present system, as a bonus, though there may be a significant number of citizens, and teachers, who see this as a moral obligation or an integral component of the teacher's role. If that were the case, then the percentages presented in the tables of this section would be indicative of the relative failure of teachers, particularly those in large schools, to fulfil their obligations.

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As it happens to be the case that the duties of teachers beyond the hours of approximately 8.45 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. have not been formalised, it is appropriate now to consider the opinions of headmasters on several aspects of the possible extension of the involvement of schools in the care and supervision of children.

Professional Opinion on Extended Involvement of Schools

There are at least two major parties involved in any move which might open up the primary school to a greater degree of contact with the community - the community itself, and the staff of the school. The purpose of this section is to consider the issues from the point of view of the school staff, in particular the headmaster, and in this chapter it is pertinent to consider several items on Form 5 of the survey questionnaire.

Headmasters were asked to consider fourteen general statements and to indicate in respect of each one which of several responses most closely corresponded with their own view (see Table 6.7). There is thus a scale of agreement which makes it possible to represent the aggregate response to items in terms of means (averages) and other statistical expressions.

It is apparent that primary school headmasters at this stage are adopting a guarded stance with regard to the matter of involving schools in the supervision of children beyond the present commitment. Among the items attracting a low level of support is 6: *Schools should be equipped and organised to care for children, where parents wish, from about 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.* Forty-two headmasters expressed strong disagreement and 29 general disagreement, making 71 who did not wish to see the school as an all-day community centre for children. However, it could be argued that in the context of the pattern of school organisation prevailing in Western Australia the surprising outcome is that 33 did agree with the idea, including 8 who strongly agreed. The range of comments on this item included the following:

- School is an educational institution NOT a child minding centre.
- Agree on the whole but the mind boggles at the abuses such a situation might lead to.
- From 3.30 p.m. to 6 p.m., I would agree. In my experience I have never met children arriving much before 7.45 a.m.
- With specially trained staff *only*, not necessarily teachers.

TABLE 6.7: AGREEMENT OF HEADMASTERS TO STATEMENTS REGARDING CARE OF CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS

Statement	Frequency of Responses						Mean response
	(1) Strongly disagree	(2) Generally disagree	(3) Unimportant, irrelevant, uncertain	(4) Generally agree	(5) Strongly agree	(6) No response	
1. Children need to have a less formal environment than the school for their out-of-school hours	1	7	6	65	31	0	4.1
2. The school is able to provide a suitable environment for regular supervision out of school hours	18	31	13	46	2	0	2.8
3. If school facilities are to be used outside normal school hours it is essential that properly trained staff be employed	2	5	2	16	85	0	4.6
4. Problems of cleaning and maintenance would be complicated by the regular use of school buildings and equipment after hours	3	16	12	43	36	0	3.8
5. Transport would be a major problem with children who stay on after school	18	23	24	16	29	0	3.2
6. Schools should be equipped and organised to care for children where parents wish, from about 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.	42	29	6	25	8	0	2.3
7. Flexible working hours should be a normal condition of employment to allow at least one parent to supervise children before and after school	5	10	10	35	50	0	4.0
8. To operate a regular child care programme at this school would require extra space and equipment	2	6	1	33	67	1	4.4
9. The whole concept of what goes on in primary schools should be thoroughly re-considered to cater more fully for local community needs and circumstances	11	20	11	37	30	1	3.5
10. It should be compulsory for children who are unsupervised to attend an organised facility out of school hours	40	37	8	17	7	1	2.2
11. One of the main problems in any child care programme would be that of attracting the children who need it most	1	6	9	47	47	0	4.2
12. Child care programmes should be planned positively to fit in with the desired life style of families in the community rather than merely to remedy problems which have become a public embarrassment	2	3	9	49	42	5	4.2
13. Funds should be given to enable parents to care for their own children	48	35	12	6	8	1	2.0
14. Supervision out of school may inhibit the personal and social development of children	12	41	26	25	6	0	2.7

- Where need exists, as at..., due to long shift hours for the fathers.
- Too long a period with one environment.
- Parents should be encouraged and assisted to accept their responsibilities.
- This would be substituting school for home life which is not to be desired.
- Parents should provide care for children. Emotional deprivation would result if schools undertook this very personal service.
- I consider it to be important that parents should not be given the opportunity to dodge their responsibilities towards their children. In extreme cases a small number of children may need this special care.
- More important problems should be dealt with first. The answer is not to be found in schools themselves.
- The number of children needing care before 8.30 a.m. is less than those after school, but in some ways the problem is greater.
- Only for one parent families where no arrangement can be made for supervision. Family responsibility should be parents' first priority.
- The morning session is not really necessary.
- The developing child requires the love and affection of a stable home-life in which they participate. Home would become little more than a place in which to sleep.
- Must not interfere with formal school organisation. Suggest properly planned facilities provided within the school grounds, but not in the school buildings.
- This is a subject which would need to be discussed by parents in every locality, to suit the provision to the local problem.
- Staff generally disapprove of the social conditions which leave children uncared for. However, if such conditions exist then care must be provided by society.

It should not be deduced from these comments and from the structured responses that headmasters and teachers are opposed to mothers taking employment. There appears to be evidence that this is not the case in the responses to item 7: *Flexible working hours should be a normal condition of employment to allow at least one parent to supervise children before and after school.* Fifty respondents strongly agreed, and 35 generally agreed, making 85 who supported this idea. It may be interesting to speculate which of the two changes (items 6 and 7) is the more radical or would be the more difficult to effect; the organisation of schools and patterns of attendance at regular employment both are major social institutions.

Have teachers here supported changes to employment rather than to schools because the latter would affect them more directly, or because they are not aware of how complicated the former would be, or because this is their informed and carefully considered judgment regarding a possible solution to problems of unminded children?

The possibility of reorganising hours of employment was discussed briefly in Chapter 5. Following are comments from headmasters in support of their responses to item 7:

- This is preferable to children being "minded" in schools.
- This would permit parents to assume a responsibility which is *theirs* for their child's sake.
- Working parents need to accept their responsibilities - it is not for the employers to stagger their hours to suit the employees.
- Strongly agree. Only the parent can give the love and affection necessary for primary age children.
- Strongly agree. We feel that every child should expect to be farewelled by a parent when he leaves for school. Similarly, when a child goes home from school, ideally he should go home to a parent, his mother preferably.

The statement which received the strongest disagreement was 13: *Funds should be given to enable parents to care for their own children.* Eighty-three headmasters were opposed to the idea, 48 of them strongly. This response was a little surprising in view of the strong support for the notion of parents looking after their own children. However, many headmasters explained their attitude in comments, which have been reproduced in Chapter 5.

The relationship between responses to item 7 and item 13 is presented in Table 6.8.

TABLE 6.8: CROSS-TABULATION OF NUMBERS OF HEADMASTERS' RESPONSES TO ITEMS 7 AND 13 ON QUESTIONNAIRE FORM 5

Statement 13	Statement 7					Row totals
	1. Strongly disagree	2. Generally disagree	3. Uncertain	4. Generally agree	5. Strongly agree	
1. Strongly disagree	1	5	3	20	19	48
2. Generally disagree	1	3	3	10	18	35
3. Uncertain	1	0	3	4	4	12
4. Generally agree	1	2	0	1	2	6
5. Strongly agree	1	0	1	0	6	8
Column Totals:	5	10	10	35	49	109

In view of the frequencies already noted (Table 6.7) it is obvious that there must be a strong negative relationship between items 7 and 13, for most headmasters agreed with 7 and disagreed with 13. From inspection of the table it is clear that well over half of the responses are bunched in the four cells at the top right hand corner, which means that 67 out of the 109 who responded to both items *agreed* with flexible working hours and *disagreed* with payments to parents. Ten headmasters disagreed with both; 9 agreed with both; and 22 were uncertain of their attitude to one or both of the statements.

Headmasters were equivocal on item 2: *The school is able to provide a suitable environment for regular supervision out of school hours*, which may indicate that the statement itself is a little ambiguous, especially considering that they were in strong agreement with item 1: *Children need to have a less formal environment than the school for their out-of-school hours*. Comments appended to items 1 and 2 may be enlightening:

- Doesn't it depend on how formal a particular school is? Some are more formal than others.
- Undirected play is important in the psychological growth of the child.
- A recreation centre away from the school would be preferable.
- Where there is a very free, informal to the extreme, home life even out-of-school activities need some formality.
- Not enough facilities, adventure playgrounds, libraries, etc. in many schools.
- Parents are generally against school and in my opinion would be against their children having to go to "school" after school hours.
- The normal, secure child also needs to grow in the experience of unsupervised responsible freedom within parental limits. The atypical and insecure need a greater degree of supervision.
- Until teachers and children are provided with lockers and proper security of property primary school classrooms are quite unsuitable for general use of the public. Halls, library, playing fields are very well suited.
- Problem children tend to regard school as undesirable and object to being involved in organised institutions. They are not prepared to follow adult direction. Formal environments such as schools are unsuitable for the children being considered.
- No provision - all teachers emphatic that classrooms are *NOT* to be used - netball courts, cricket pitches, halls (if you are lucky to have one) yes; but definitely no children in classroom after school hours.

- Yes (item 2) but under the care of trained child minders not teachers unless trained for this occupation.
- Despite the fact that school today is less formal than in the past we feel that even more informality may be desirable in out-of-school hours.

There could be cause for concern in some of these comments. For example, is it really the case that teachers would feel untrained in a (primary school) child-minding situation; that schools are too formal to allow children to develop interests; that parents are generally against school?

A final observation of the subject of whether the school should be involved in the care of children beyond present obligations relates to item 9: *The whole concept of what goes on in primary schools should be thoroughly re-considered to cater more fully for local community needs and circumstances.* This statement is less specific and less radical than item 6, which attracted some support but considerable opposition. Hence there is quite strong support for the suggestion that the primary school programme needs to be thoroughly re-considered, with strong agreement from 30 headmasters and general agreement from another 37. It seems to indicate that there is an awareness of social change and an attitude that would favour a school programme that is more relevant to social realities. Although there was some confusion over the precise meaning of item 9, several headmasters provided thoughtful comments:

- We feel that there is a need to review curriculum content and for district superintendents to look at the school for what it is and its environment and its needs rather than compare it and its staff with achievements elsewhere.
- Sufficient variation or flexibility to adapt the curriculum to suit local community needs and circumstances already exist and district superintendents are highly conscious of the need.
- Yes, but teachers should come in as specialists in formal education and not be involved in child minding.
- Nothing wrong with the present system if followed correctly. It caters for community needs already.
- The local community already has extensive use of the school hall and grounds. Further catering for community needs would require added buildings, equipment and trained personnel. It should be remembered that the school is at present fulfilling a high priority function. Overloading could imperil this function.

- Schools would need to be re-designed with sections which could be sealed off after school hours to prevent interference with teaching aids and other equipment and personal property.
- Architectural questions are important so that public access can be facilitated while maintaining security for staff and pupils' belongings and work. The prime purpose of the school is after all the 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. work. If modification can facilitate other use this is most desirable.
- Much more co-operation between different authorities needed. A task force approach is needed.

Several items in Form 5 of the questionnaire concern practical issues which would arise if schools were to extend their hours of work or scope of operations. One of these attracted the strongest support of all - item 3: *If school facilities are to be used outside normal school hours it is essential that properly trained staff be employed.* Eighty-five headmasters expressed strong agreement and another 16 general agreement. It would be more informative to know what sort of training they have in mind, but in any case there appears to be a strong opinion that the school facilities should not be used by just anybody who wants to. Although most headmasters simply recorded their strong agreement with the statement, the appended comments provide important insights:

- (Uncertain) Depends upon type of activity for which school is to be used.
- This is *the* major problem with the use of school facilities.
- They wouldn't get the use of it otherwise!
- (Strongly agree) Mere supervisory roles would be ineffective.
- Depends entirely upon individual - some untrained people can handle child centred situations well.
- Not only trained but officially appointed so that they carry the legal responsibility for proper maintenance of plant.
- No, providing care taken in selection.
- (Generally agree) Not teachers. Too intent on discipline and direct behaviour.
- Experience has revealed that no matter how well meaning and keen they may be inexperience in coping with numbers of children has resulted in damage to school projects and materials.
- Mainly trained in how to handle problem children.

Almost as strong was agreement with item 8: *To operate a regular child care programme at this school would require extra space and equipment.* The almost unanimous agreement with this statement seems to indicate that headmasters perceive their present facilities as not allowing any scope for operating beyond the present programme. The statement itself does not provide information on whether space and equipment is adequate for the present programme, though the fact that 67 respondents agreed strongly suggests that they are not all enamoured of their present circumstances. Some headmasters added comments to their responses:

- If meals, games and activities are being considered - definitely yes.
- School is poorly provided with non-schooling type equipment. Sporting equipment is satisfactory.
- Equipment is the major problem along with storage space.
- Yes. Another building, completely divorced from the classroom.
- Classrooms are not appropriate and the necessary equipment is minimal.
- The school hall and grounds can be used, but additional equipment would be very necessary. I am strongly opposed to the use of existing classrooms.
- Completely different from that used for a normal school programme.
- A hall and art/craft rooms necessary.
- A programme of sorts could be operated from school as is but naturally more space and equipment would enhance type of programme offered.
- Apart from the adjacent town oval playing and activity space is very restricted. Sporting bodies have use of the oval most days after school hours.

The majority of headmasters supported the statement in item 4: *Problems of cleaning and maintenance would be complicated by the regular use of school buildings and equipment after hours.* However, nearly all of those who added their own comments considered that the problems were not insurmountable and should not be a barrier to change if this was desirable.

There was some confusion in responses to item 5: *Transport would be a major problem with children who stay on after school.* Some referred to children who go home by bus as being a problem, but where these are in rural areas the question is hardly relevant - there is no point in having them stay on after school. Nevertheless, there remains a wide range of community circumstances which affect the suitability of the school as a place for children to stay after school hours. See Table 6.7 for the distribution of responses.

Items 10 and 11 seem to represent a basic dilemma in the whole subject of this report. Item 10: *It should be compulsory for children who are unsupervised to attend an organised facility out of school hours* attracted the second highest measure of *disagreement*. Item 11: *One of the main problems in any child care programme would be that of attracting the children who need it most* was third highest at the *agreement* end of the scale. Table 6.9 shows the overlap of responses to these two statements.

TABLE 6.9: CROSS-TABULATION OF NUMBERS OF RESPONSES TO ITEMS 10 AND 11 ON QUESTIONNAIRE FORM 5

Statement 11	Statement 10					Row Totals
	1. Strongly disagree	2. Generally disagree	3. Uncertain	4. Generally agree	5. Strongly agree	
1. Strongly disagree	1	0	0	0	0	1
2. Generally disagree	2	1	1	1	1	6
3. Uncertain	2	0	1	3	2	8
4. Generally agree	16	22	3	6	0	47
5. Strongly agree	19	14	3	7	4	47
Column Totals:	40	37	8	17	7	109

Looking at the lower left corner of the cross-tabulation it is seen that 71 headmasters both disagree with item 10 and agree with item 11. Apparently only 17 headmasters, in the lower right four cells, saw compulsion as the solution to the problem recognised in item 11. Do the others offer a solution of some other kind?

Written comments varied as to whether the reason for rejecting item 10 was ideological or pragmatic. Those who commented on item 11 felt either that a top rate programme would attract the children or else that there was probably nothing that could be done. Both items attracted further comments about parents' responsibilities:

Item 10

- Attracting the child himself and backing this up by convincing the parents of the value would have much greater effect.
- No chance in the world. Failure would be immediate.
- Only where children are obviously suffering from lack of supervision. Some children are better off being self reliant.

. We have enough regimentation now.

. Certain families make adequate arrangements already. Anything compulsory would be doomed from the start.

. I prefer pressure to ensure parents make adequate arrangements themselves.

. Infringes civil liberties. Dictatorial!

. Freedom of choice must not be taken from the individual - all help should be offered but no compulsion expected.

. Compulsion only affects attendance, not benefits gained.

. Some children profit from a lack of supervision - display independence, initiative etc. Others require supervision.

. Although children need to have their leisure time properly organised, out of school activities should attract children through interest not compulsion.

Item 11

. This could be a problem. We believe that any child care programme should be attractive in itself - so attractive that it will draw all children.

. Except in the case of children whose behaviour is deviant - when the Community Welfare Department should exercise control.

. Many families would not use it because of charity implications.

. In this area, those who least require the care are the regulars of all juvenile clubs and associations.

. The ones they want to catch are awake to the threat to their liberty.

. Many problem children lack the imagination to have any interests at all.

. This is *the* problem.

. Children become accustomed to the freedom of unsupervised leisure time and would be difficult to retain.

. (Disagree) I would think that the parents of the type of child needing this would be only too willing to hand over responsibility for their children.

It is tempting to wonder how many of these respondents would be happy to have their *schools* assessed according to whether children attend voluntarily out of sheer interest in the programme that is provided. Who has convinced us that 9.00 a.m.-3.00 p.m. comuplsory attendance is essential and democratic whereas beyond those hours would be dictatorial, infringing human rights, undemocratic, and so on? And how many teachers apply in their classrooms the belief that children need opportunity to develop self reliance, independence, initiative? Should these skills be developed only incidentally,

being incompatible with any kind of organised programme either in or out of school hours?

Item 12 is the only remaining statement to attract a well defined pattern of responses. Ninety-one headmasters agreed that *child care programmes should be planned positively to fit in with the desired life style of families in the community rather than merely to remedy problems which have become a public embarrassment.* However, there was some ambiguity in the statement, which resulted in some headmasters considering that it was irrefutable, unquestionable, while others took up the section referring to *life style:*

> . If "desired life style" is perpetual drunkenness care should be arranged to remedy subsequent problems.
>
> . In areas such as this one, to fit in with the families' life style would contradict all that has been taught and encouraged in school.

The intent of item 12 had been to determine opinion on whether child care should be seen as a problem solving strategy or as a positive contribution to the pattern of life as it is emerging in Australian communities. It would seem that many of the respondents have *problem* children in mind when speaking of facilities and programmes for child care, either because they consider that well-behaved children can look after themselves or else because there already are problem children who inevitably attract attention in a discussion of this subject. One headmaster *agreed* with the statement but added:

> The introduction of child care activities here would be to remedy existing problems.

The opinions expressed in this section have ranged somewhat wider than the matter of extending the involvement of schools. Nevertheless, even in these areas the opinions of headmasters have contributed to our understanding of professional opinion on the whole subject.

Variety of circumstances has again dominated the evidence from the schools - community values; school facilities; headmasters' perceptions of the role of the school. An attempt will be made to draw these many threads together in the final chapter.

The reader is referred to Appendix B for an extract of a report on schools in Sweden. This may have been a useful stimulant to accompany the questionnaires;

but it may also have diverted headmasters from the task of giving unbiassed responses to the questions at their face value. In any case, the report did not appear until September 1974.

Summary

Primary schools spend about 35 hours a week *minding* children, though few would admit that this was an important reason for their existence. In addition many teachers spend a portion of their time voluntarily supervising children in a variety of activities. Headmasters speak with several voices on the question of whether schools should officially extend their operations to a longer period of time each day. Part of this ambivalence is due to the fact that the value in doing so would vary from place to place, but part of it relates to different beliefs held by headmasters regarding the roles of the school and the family.

7. CHILDREN AND THE FUTURE

The Role of Research

The researcher as such is called upon to extend the boundaries of human knowledge, and the quality of his work depends in part on his ability to discriminate between fact and fiction, relevant and irrelevant, genuine evidence and wishful thinking, valid deduction and special pleading. But as an informed person in his special field the researcher may also be called upon by society to make statements of opinion, judgment, or even speculation which go well beyond the hard evidence of his research.

In the field of child care it appears that regardless of whether conclusive research evidence has been assembled there is a social and political demand that decisions should be made in the immediate future. In any case, a researcher in a particular field may not be in the best position to read all the inputs which are required for political decisions, though he is likely to be a person who has thought about his field of study and on that input his opinion is likely to be pertinent.

In this present project it became apparent that there would be no simple specific answer to the question: what should Australian communities be doing about their children out of school hours? But it is probably reasonable to seek a general answer out of which various implications will flow for the many different segments of our society. The research data as such does not lead by simple deduction to that answer, but it has helped to describe the domain in which decisions have to be made.

Recommendation

Not only is this study specifically concerned with primary school children out of school hours but a particular focus of the research is the possible future role of primary schools in relation to what is currently regarded as children's free time. Further, the main source of information has been the headmasters of primary schools.

The conclusions and recommendations will therefore relate especially to the Government schools system, and although there are some implications for other agencies nothing in this report should be construed as limiting the opportunities for voluntary and other Government or non-Government agencies to make a contribution. It is more likely, in fact, that the proposals in this chapter will serve to encourage voluntary service for children in their free time.

The following considerations, to which attention has been drawn in previous chapters, are assumed to be relevant to the process of seeking decision-oriented conclusions from the study.

1. Communities differ widely with regard to the quality of amenities and opportunities available to children. This is a well known fact and is strongly supported by evidence from headmasters.

2. It is extremely difficult to find adequate measures or indicators of need, where "need" refers to some kind of lack in the way primary school children are cared for when they are not in school. In particular, statistics about working mothers, although relevant, do not by themselves provide an accurate indication of the extent to which children are neglected or at risk.

3. In spite of the lack of accurate indicators, headmasters expressed a strong belief that there is a widespread incidence of cultural deprivation among Western Australian communities. There was considerable support among headmasters for the idea of providing recreational and social workers to work among primary school children out of school hours.

4. There was also considerable concern that children's free time should not become too institutionalised, and strong opposition to the prospect of extending compulsory attendance laws beyond the present formal school programme.

5. Headmasters were generally opposed to the idea of having schools open all day to care for children. However, this was an unqualified statement relating specifically to child-care. There was quite strong support for the proposal that there is a need to reappraise the role of the school to meet local community needs and circumstances.

6. Many headmasters felt strongly that parents should take responsibility for their children out of school hours and that failure to do so constituted neglect of the children. Nevertheless, some of them also admitted that the neglect of children is likely to continue and that schools could play some part in alleviating the situation.

7. Headmasters were adamant that trained staff are essential if schools are to provide programmes for children in their free time.

In brief there appear to be areas of need, though the nature and extent of the needs vary widely; there is reasonable support for the notion that schools could be more fully involved in meeting community needs; it is important to avoid excessive regimentation of children. It is recommended therefore, that -

Primary schools should be equipped and staffed to provide and co-ordinate such out of school programmes as may be deemed desirable and feasible for children in the locality served by the school.

Further Considerations

In defence of the idea of placing further responsibility on primary schools the following additional circumstances need to be taken into account.

1. The present proposal in no way pre-empts the advisory, facilitating and co-ordinating roles of bodies such as the Out of School Child Care Association, other relevant Government Departments, or recreation officers employed by local government. Schools should be seen as an additional resource, authorised and competent as a natural extension of their present role, to engage in programmes out of formal school time where this would be of benefit to the local community.

2. Although many primary school facilities at present may not be ideally structured for an expansion of their role into the area of less formal supervision for a longer period each day, it is unlikely that the proliferation of a new brand of institutions - buildings, staff, equipment, land - simply for the purpose of supervising children for approximately two hours a day would be economically, logistically or politically feasible. In contrast, the primary school premises and land are already available, are designed (or should be) for children of this age group, and are largely unused at the time of day with which this discussion is concerned.

3. In Western Australia already there are moves to broaden the scope of activities associated with primary schools. Current developments are in the fields of pre-primary education and health. The significance of these developments is that the stereotype of the school is being broken down and alternative models are emerging.

4. School programmes in recent years have tended to become less formal and more directly oriented towards the interests of children. Although many headmasters in the survey still considered that children need a less formal environment for their out of school hours, the contrast between being in school and being out of school as far as the child's enjoyment is concerned probably is not as great as it has been in the past.

5. The appointment of suitably trained staff to promote and co-ordinate programmes of after school activities, as well as the provision of facilities and equipment, will inevitably have a beneficial effect on the school as a whole. A teacher trained for this sort of position should have skills in social work and community recreation and be able to attend to particular social problems which may be neglected by regular teachers with their large class of pupils. Analogous positions now established in some high schools are those of youth education officer and social worker.

6. An important dimension of the proposal is the degree of local autonomy to be assumed by schools in connection with out of school programmes. The *core* of the proposal is that schools, and in particular suitably trained staff members, should be responsible for ascertaining the local demand and doing whatever seems appropriate to make the necessary provisions. It is no part of this proposal that schools should, regardless of local circumstances, set about establishing after school activities. Rather, *if* it is determined, by appropriate local enquiry, that such a programme is desirable and is likely to be viable, then the school would be authorised and equipped to take the necessary action, but *all* schools should have staff competent to take responsibility in this total area.

7. The main requirement in a locality may be that an informed, respected co-ordinator take action to set in motion community thinking about its own affairs. Neighbourhoods often are not conducive to joint action among their members, and this may be especially so in localities where the need is greatest. Where a large proportion of mothers take full-time employment there is relatively little time for inter-family communication. Families in these areas are often short term residents saving as much money as possible so they can move to another place.

Perhaps another important obstacle is the Australian sense of privacy, an unwillingness to interfere in the affairs of others, reticence about setting oneself up as a local organiser, especially if this has any hint of suggestion that one's own house is in order and others apparently need help with theirs. If the school has been successful in establishing favourable relationships with pupils and parents it should be able to offer appropriate assistance with regard to after school hours activities for children.

Staffing

The central element in the above proposal is the school staff member with a special commitment to social and recreational work. It is probable that such a person should be a qualified teacher with a study major or additional diploma in social work. There would be advantages in selecting for these positions teachers who had proved themselves in the classroom and had evinced an interest in the broader welfare of their pupils. They could be given a course in social work and returned to the schools for these special duties.

On the other hand, there probably also should be a stronger element of social work in normal courses of teacher training. Teachers should be more keenly aware of the problems which their pupils experience at home, yet retain the sensitivity to avoid unwarranted interference.

Students admitted to pre-service specialist courses in school social work, if they are financially supported by the Government, should be selected on the basis of apparent personal suitability for these important duties. Although it is possible that the teacher-social worker would also be competent to assist with the diagnosis and treatment of learning difficulties the social worker's essential qualifications would include a fertile imagination and considerable energy in coping with new situations, and personal acceptability in the community served by the school. The detailed duties would vary from school to school. Appointees should be given to understand that they are responsible for innovating and exploring widely in ideas for making schools more interesting environments and for ascertaining and catering for the general welfare of pupils. Approval to proceed with the implementation of ideas should be given by an appropriate school authority.

Finance

The formula for allocating funds for social welfare is of crucial importance. Handouts to parents were strongly opposed by headmasters in the survey. Little can be done without money, and money deftly administered can trigger social movements beyond the area of its immediate expenditure. On the other hand, funds can be wasted, abused and lead to social injustices.

It is suggested that in Western Australia at the present time funds could be allocated to permit the appointment of school staff responsible for social work and recreation. With the recent expansion of Australian Government spending in schools many additional staff have been allocated to schools, sometimes for special purposes but sometimes they are known simply as supernumeraries and given such duties as can be found for them. Although many headmasters have made good use of their extra teachers it is probable that specific appointments in the field of welfare and recreation would be welcomed. Teacher-librarians are a recent precedent for this approach. Starting with the larger schools or with schools where there is a special need, the appointment of social/recreation staff could become an established practice.

Finance could also be provided, perhaps on a matching basis, for renovations, alterations and initial equipment required specifically for an after hours programme at primary schools. Where the school is not a suitable venue and where nobody else is taking the necessary initiative, the school as a co-ordinating body could be responsible for equipping an alternative centre or several smaller centres for the same purposes.

Apart from the financing of related processes such as staff training and procedures for evaluation and public reporting of programmes it is doubtful whether any other special direct payments would be practicable. Where after-school activities are seen as an integral function of a primary school then the normal funding arrangements for the school could apply - salaried staff, voluntary assistance, children paying for certain items of expense, fund-raising activities to supplement the facilities, and basic provision as for the school generally. Where non-state schools wish to provide a similar service then the after-school component could similarly be acknowledged as an integral part of the school and assistance made available according to current policy on non-Government schools.

There would appear to be no grounds for using this particular issue, that is, the need for some school children to be supervised after school, as a means of effecting any radical redistribution of incomes throughout the community. Each child is at school for only a few years, mothers work for many reasons, and people neglect their children for these and many other reasons.

In Practice

It is envisaged that each school eventually should have at least one member of staff with a special responsibility for community relations, recreation and general welfare. This person would be a fully participating member of the school staff, responsible to the headmaster and available for teaching duties if necessary. He or she would hopefully be a source of ideas which would benefit the whole school, not only those pupils who take advantage of an after-school programme.

To start a special programme the staff member, taking into account any other agencies or authorities operating in the same locality, could find out what possible demand and support there would be for regular activities for children between say 3.30 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. each day. In so doing he would present details of the kind of programme that may be offered, taking care to avoid the notion of a campaign to rescue vagrants or neglected children. At the same time an invitation could be sent to all existing clubs and organisations to ascertain any ways in which they could profitably be associated with the school-based programmes.

An attractive range of indoor and outdoor activities could be assembled - table tennis, chess, pool, television, corners for reading, appropriate refreshments, craft and hobby groups, climbing equipment and so on. Sports, marching girls, cubs, brownies and so on could be added on their days to the regular activities provided by the school itself. The success of the whole effort will depend largely upon its being seen as a positive contribution for the benefit and enjoyment of all who can attend.

The widespread implementation of these ideas should of course be subject to experience gained in pilot schemes in a variety of community circumstances throughout Western Australia.

Summary

This chapter has recommended that primary schools and their staff should be involved in programmes for children out of school. The object should be to locate in schools at least one teacher capable of taking a special interest in the recreational and social welfare of all children who attend the school. This teacher could be responsible for developing proposals, and if given local approval and support, implementing them, with regard to any aspect of recreation or social welfare that would seem potentially beneficial to the children of that school. Local requirements must determine what is to be done, though staff should be provided with adequate training, encouragement and official support.

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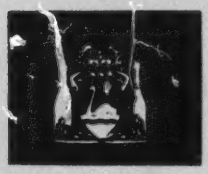
APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A - Primary School Child Care Questionnaire



Your Ref

Our Ref

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HEADMASTER/HEADMISTRESS

26th April, 1974

RE. PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD CARE SURVEY

This survey is a major part of a study being conducted by this Department with research funds allocated by the Australian Committee on Child Care Research. Would you please complete the enclosed survey questionnaire which has been sent to a sample of metropolitan and country primary schools in Western Australia.

Several studies have been carried out on a local basis into the society's need to supervise children out of school hours, or into particular aspects of this problem. There is now clearly a need for a survey which will collate and analyze the findings of previous studies and determine the present contribution and possible role of the school in this area. You will be well aware of the considerable publicity which has attended the subject of child care in recent months and of the increasingly voiced opinion that schools should be more fully involved.

Our preliminary analysis indicates that the "needs" and "problems" commonly assumed to exist are quite difficult to define accurately, and therefore their extent is also difficult to assess. Many so called "latchkey" children, for example, may or may not be a problem. Beyond this some children who are not "latchkey" according to any current definition may in fact urgently need some sort of supervision out of school hours.

In view of the sensitive side issues that can arise when this subject is raised in respect of particular families, it is <u>not</u> appropriate to question children regarding the activities of their parents. Neither, at this stage, should a survey of parents be attempted by the school for the purpose of this study, though this need not be construed as a restriction of discussion among and with parents if the occasion arises. The purpose of this survey is to ascertain the professional opinion of teachers and the current contribution of schools in regard to children's activities out of school hours.

The questions are structured to standardize responses and facilitate the analysis and summarizing of replies. Wherever the questions do not seem to apply to the circumstances of your school, please provide appropriate information.

One copy only of the questionnaire is required and this should be sent to the Superintendent of Research at Head Office not later than Friday 10th May. It should be filled in by the headmaster or his nominee using his local knowledge to collate the information from the school.

Additional copies are for circulation amongst staff. Should any members of your staff wish to submit their comments on forms 3, 4, 5 and 6 they are welcome to do so.

A copy of the report will be forwarded to you when it becomes available.

Enc.

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

Form 1

School

_____

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD CARE SURVEY

INVOLVEMENT OF SCHOOLS

Provide details of activities where school staff who because of their involvement with pupils are providing supervision outside formal school hours. "Supervision" may include formal sporting or cultural activities, informal arrangements for children to use school facilities, and so on. For this purpose, make an inventory below of provisions made by your school this week or, if the week is atypical, any recent, typical, period of five different school days.

Day	Activity or Facility Provided	Time		No. Staff Involved	No. Pupils Each Grade							Comments
		From	To		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(e.g.) Mon.	Football training	3.45	5.15	1					4	9	10	Assisted by a parent employed shift work.

105

97

School _____

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD CARE SURVEY

AGENCIES OTHER THAN SCHOOL OR HOME

Form 2

98

List all facilities, activities, or supervision arrangements, other than those provided by school or home, that are available to children enrolled in your school. Clubs, little athletics, child care centres, etc., would be included. To compile the list, find out and record the provisions used by children this week or, if the week is atypical, any recent, typical, period of five different school days. "Teachers" here refers to the number of school teachers involved, whether or not they are employed at your school.

Day	Activity or Facility Provided	Time		School Teachers Involved	No. Pupils Each Grade							Comments
		From	To		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
(e.g.) Mon.-Frid.	Day care centre	3.30	6.00	-	8	5	6					Run by Salvation Army in hall near school

106

School

_____

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD CARE SURVEY

PROVISION OF FACILITIES

Form 3

Would you like to see the following provided out of school hours for the children who attend your school? Select one of the following responses and write the corresponding number in column II.

1. No - not needed
2. Not sure
3. Yes - definite need but no current provision
4. Yes - current provision is inadequate
5. Current provision is adequate

Please support and clarify your assessments where possible with facts figures and comments, though there is no need to repeat information given on forms 1 and 2.

	I Type of Provision	II Response	III Comments
a.	Breakfast provided at school		
b.	Afternoon snack		
c.	Homework facilities		
d.	Clubs (Brownies, Ambulance Cadets etc.)		
e.	Physical activities		
f.	Creative activities (pottery, drama)		
g.	Library		
h.	Special interest and hobby groups		
i.	Recreation worker		
j.	Social worker		
k.	Community service		
l.	T.V. and films (from C.E.T.)		
m.			
n.			

School

_____

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD CARE SURVEY

CHILDREN "AT RISK"

Form 4

100

What is the extent of the following problems among children who attend your school? Tick the appropriate boxes in Section II: 1 = Minimal; 2 = Moderate; 3 = Considerable; 4 = Serious. Please support and clarify your assessments where possible with facts, figures and comments.

I Problem	II Extent				III Comments
	1	2	3	4	
1. Vandalism					
2. Theft					
3. Indiscipline at school					
4. Academic retardation					
5. Emotional deprivation					
6. Malnutrition					
7. Maltreatment at home					
8. Economic poverty					
9. Speech defects					
10. Cultural deprivation					
11. Truancy					
12. Absconding when in trouble					
13. One-parent families					
14. General neglect					
15. Other					
16.					

103

School

_____

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD CARE SURVEY

PROFESSIONAL VIEWS

Form 5(a)

The following views are sometimes expressed during discussions on catering for children before and after school. Indicate your opinion of each statement by writing in column II the number which best corresponds with your view:

1. Strongly disagree
2. Generally disagree
3. Unimportant, irrelevant, uncertain
4. Generally agree
5. Strongly agree

I Statement	II	III Comments
1. Children need to have a less formal environment than the school for their out-of-school hours		
2. The school is able to provide a suitable environment for regular supervision out of school hours		
3. If school facilities are to be used outside normal school hours it is essential that properly trained staff be employed		
4. Problems of cleaning and maintenance would be complicated by the regular use of school buildings and equipment after hours		
5. Transport would be a major problem with children who stay on after school		
6. Schools should be equipped and organized to care for children where parents wish, from about 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.		
7. Flexible working hours should be a normal condition of employment to allow at least one parent to supervise children before and after school		
8. To operate a regular child care programme at this school would require extra space and equipment		
9. The whole concept of what goes on in primary schools should be thoroughly re-considered to cater more fully for local community needs and circumstances		

PROFESSIONAL VIEWS (Cont.) Form 5(b)

I Statement	II	III Comments
10. It should be compulsory for children who are unsupervised to attend an organized facility out of school hours		
11. One of the main problems in any child care programme would be that of attracting the children who need it most		
12. Child care programmes should be planned positively to fit in with the desired life style of families in the community rather than merely to remedy problems which have become a public embarrassment		
13. Funds should be given to enable parents to care for their own children		
14. Supervision out of school may inhibit the personal and social development of children		

PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD CARE SURVEY Form 6

HEADMASTER'S COMMENTS

Please comment freely on any aspect of the topic arising out of the questionnaires or out of your own experience and observation.

APPENDIX B - "Open Doors the Key to Future"

"Three quarters of all pupils have no home waiting for them when lessons end because their parents are at work or studying or out for some other reason", says Mr Jonas Orring, the Director-General of the Royal Board of Education, who chaired Sweden's School Structure (SIA) commission (TES, 6th September 1974).

Hence the idea of an integrated school-day (*samlad skoldag)*, the aim of which is "to make the nine-year compulsory school a living educational and social centre". This concept is the keystone of the SIA school and the hub around which all the proposed reforms revolve.

The integrated school-day would contain much more than the present one, which finishes in the early afternoon. It might, for example, last from six in the morning till six in the evening - though the report recommends that the precise length be left to individual communities.

The obligatory part of the new school-day, averaging about six hours for infants and juniors and seven hours for senior pupils, would be used not only for lessons, but also for activities such as prep, extra tuition, individual studies in the school library, meetings of pupil councils, clubs, sport, drama and music.

The non-compulsory part of the school-day, both before and after lessons, would be reserved for various voluntary activities and hobbies, which now take place mostly in local community leisure centres.

SIA believes that the integrated school-day would roll the traditional schools, nursery classes, child-minding homes, leisure centres and the like into "a community-oriented open institution, playing a central role in the life of our growing generation".

If the construction of out-of-school centres in Sweden continued at the present snail's pace they would accommodate barely 28 per cent of children concerned by 1980, says SIA. By housing them in the school premises, wherever possible (so far only 30 comprehensive schools out of 4,750 have done that), the goal would be reached much more quickly.

(A.C. Viago in *The Times Educational Supplement*, 29th September 1974)

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